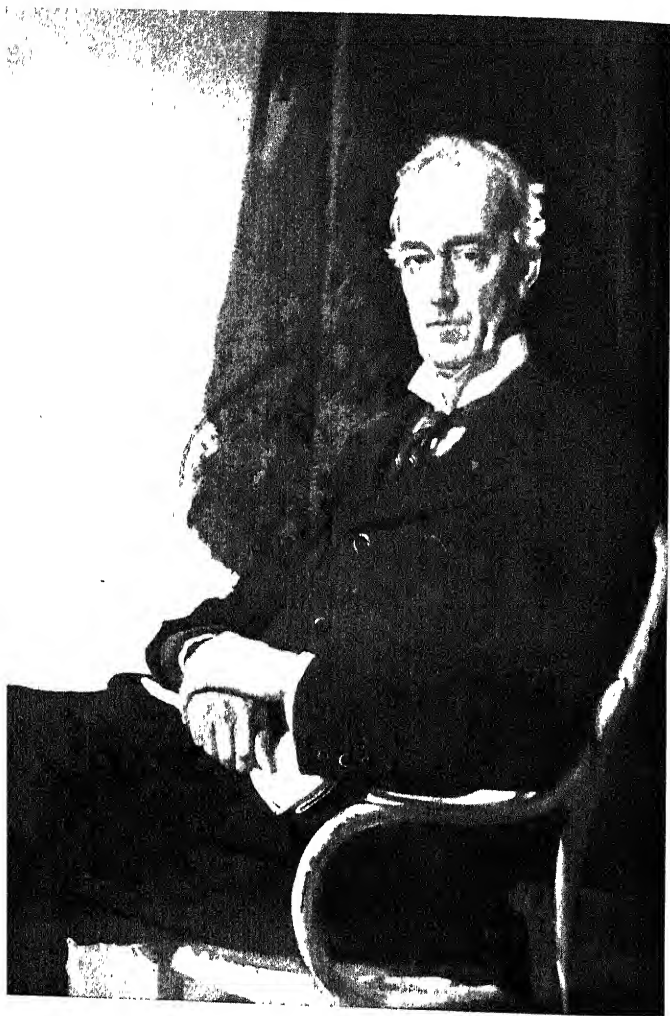


LORD RIDDELL'S INTIMATE DIARY OF  
THE PEACE CONFERENCE  
AND AFTER



LORD RIDDELI.

From the portrait by Sir William Orpen, presented to him by the Newspaper Conference, representing the London and Provincial Press.

[Frontispiece



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INTIMATE DIARY OF  
THE PEACE CONFERENCE  
AND AFTER  
1918—1923

LONDON  
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## PREFACE

THIS VOLUME is a sequel to my War Diary. It covers the period November 1918 to November 1923, when I abandoned the diary habit. Being unsuitable for publication at the present time, numerous entries in the original have been omitted. As in the case of my War Diary, the proceeds will be given to the Newspaper Press Fund.

In November 1918 I was appointed by the London and Provincial newspapers to represent them at the Peace Conference, not with a view to dispensing with their correspondents, but with the object of establishing an official link between the Conference and the British Press. In that capacity I attended sixteen conferences—three in Paris, three in London, four at Lympne, and the others at San Remo, Boulogne, Brussels, Spa, Lucerne and Cannes. Later, I went to Washington to represent the British Press at the Disarmament Conference. Therefore, as a privileged observer, I had special facilities for recording what took place both on the stage and behind the scenes. My opportunities in this respect were enhanced by my friendship with many of the leading actors. I fear I neglected to make the most of my blessings. Certainly I failed to note many interesting events and conversations. Keeping a diary is a hard task for a busy man, particularly for one who hates the mechanical labour of writing with his own hand.

Apart from the conferences, my diary, owing to my frequent meetings with Mr. Lloyd George and other members of the Government, may be regarded as an intimate record of their views on the political situation from time to time.

The following particulars are provided to give a glimpse of the conditions under which I worked in Paris. Only formal business was transacted at the plenary or public sessions. The real work was done by Clemenceau, Lloyd George, President Wilson and Orlando to begin with. Later, on Orlando's retirement, by the first three. These delegates usually met at the French Foreign Office, a palatial building on the Quai d'Orsay.

## PREFACE

The meetings took place in private in a room forming part of a spacious suite on the first floor. While the conferences were proceeding I sat in an adjoining room, one door of which opened into the conference chamber. Here also sat the officials and others who were likely to be required by the delegates, so that I had many opportunities for talks with interesting people.

The British delegation were housed, for the most part, at the Hotel Majestic. Mr. Lloyd George was provided with a flat in the rue Nitot. It was furnished with beautiful French furniture, which proved rather a burden to his staff, who were in constant fear lest visitors should injure it with their cigars and cigarettes—which, by the way, some of them did, thus leading to a heavy claim for dilapidations.

Mr. Balfour was housed in a flat above that of Mr. Lloyd George. Sir Maurice Hankey and his staff occupied an annex to the Hotel Majestic. The offices of the British delegation were in the Hotel Astoria, where I also had offices, including a big room for my Press meetings, which were largely attended. It being thought undesirable that the Press should be under any obligation to the Government, I did not live at the Hotel Majestic but at the Ritz Hotel.

R.

# Chapter I

*L. G.'s interview with Asquith—The Press and the Peace Conference—Indemnity Problems—Newspapers for the troops—Botha on the Peace terms—The General Election.*

NOVEMBER 16TH, 1918.—Drove to Walton with L. G., who had made a big speech to the joint party meeting in the morning and had been at the Thanksgiving Service at the Albert Hall in the afternoon. He was very chatty on the journey. Asquith has had an interview with him, with what precise object L. G. does not know. A. referred to the undesirability of Lloyd Georgian candidates fighting Asquithian candidates<sup>1</sup> and threw out a hint of a desire to attend the Peace Conference. The following conversation took place, either at the interview or while A. and L. G. were walking to St. Margaret's for the M.P.s' Thanksgiving Service on the 11th. Some event was referred to. L. G. said, "No doubt due to mischief makers."

A. : They are always about, and usually appear at the wrong moment !

L. G. thinks Asquith referred to the events of December 1916.<sup>2</sup> L. G. again repeated (to me) that had not A. been badly advised, the split would never have occurred. "I did not want to be Prime Minister," he said, "I only wanted to run the war."

R. : The arrangement would not have worked. It would have come to an end at an early date. You cannot have two engineers responsible for warding off an avalanche.

L. G. : Perhaps you are right. He would not have had the courage to come to great decisions when there was opposition from Haig and Robertson. He would have funk'd unity of command.

17TH.—To dinner at the P.M.'s at Walton. Found

<sup>1</sup> At the General Election in the following month.

<sup>2</sup> When Mr. Lloyd George succeeded Mr. Asquith as Prime Minister.

Winston<sup>1</sup> there. He had brought his election manifesto for P.M. to read.

L. G. (laughing) : I shall take it into the other room so not to disturb the conversation.

When he returned they had a long talk about the election [I made a full note of this.]

24TH.—Dined with L. G., Mrs. L. G., his son Richard and his wife.

The conversation turned on Foch,<sup>2</sup> whereupon L. G. gave his son and daughter-in-law a vivid account of Foch's work, taking just as much trouble, and expending just as much energy, as if he had been talking to the King and Queen. This is one of his characteristics. He never seems too weary to give his best.

26TH.—Called upon Sir William Tyrrell<sup>3</sup> at the Foreign Office by appointment, to discuss Press arrangements at the Peace Conference. He showed me a memorandum from the Embassy in Paris in which it was proposed that there should be a censorship of telegrams and letters going to the British and Dominion newspapers. The proposal was to form a Press Bureau in Paris under the charge of a Government Officer. It was further proposed that the number of correspondents should be limited and that only approved correspondents should be allowed to attend. Further that no Press messages should be permitted except from duly authorised correspondents. I said the Press would strongly oppose any censorship. Sir William Tyrrell replied that there was much to be said for holding the Conference in public. I arranged to bring the question of censorship and limitation of the number of correspondents before the newspaper conference to-morrow. [They passed a strong resolution against both.]

29TH.—Met Bonar Law at Downing Street. He said he was just holding his head above water, but was very weary. I complimented him on his Glasgow speech. He said he had not prepared it and was surprised how well it read.

30TH.—Dined with L. G. and Mrs. L. G. at Walton Heath.

<sup>1</sup> The Rt. Hon. Winston S. Churchill.

<sup>2</sup> Marshal Foch, Generalissimo of the Allied Armies ; d. 1929.

<sup>3</sup> Now Lord Tyrrell ; Assist. Under Sec. for Foreign Affairs, 1919-25

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He had a great reception at Newcastle, but is suffering from a cold. When I arrived, he said, "I have been reading Croker.<sup>1</sup> Things have changed but little. Listen to this." Then he read a letter from the Duke of Wellington saying he should do what he thought best for the country, irrespective of what his critics in the Press might say.

Much talk about Northcliffe.<sup>2</sup> L. G. said N. wanted to be one of the British representatives at the Peace Conference, (where L. G. got this information he did not say) but that he, L. G., would not agree, and would rather cease to be P.M.. He added, "He asked that I should tell him what was to be the composition of my Government, should I become Prime Minister again. Of course I would never agree to give such information."

We talked of the question of indemnities by Germany.

L. G. : They must pay to the uttermost farthing. But the question is how they can be made to pay beyond a certain point. They can pay only by means of gold or goods. We do not mean to take their goods, because that would prejudice our trade. For instance, if we insisted on their supplying so many million pounds' worth of aniline dyes every year, that would not suit our people, as we should thus be ruining our manufacture of dyes. I said to Hughes<sup>3</sup> the other day, "Shall you take their goods? We shan't!" He did not know what to reply.

DECEMBER 1ST.—Sir Howard Spicer,<sup>4</sup> a member of the Committee at the Whips' Office, charged with supervising the arrangements for the election to be held on December 14th, saw me and produced a letter from Lord Milner,<sup>5</sup> saying that before the election the Army authorities would distribute newspapers among the troops. I said all the newspapers must have the right to take part in the scheme. Later Spicer said that all newspapers were to have the opportunity to send copies

<sup>1</sup> John Wilson Croker (1780-1857), the politician and essayist and the supposed original of Rigby in Disraeli's *Coningsby*.

<sup>2</sup> Viscount Northcliffe, the newspaper proprietor; d. 1922.

<sup>3</sup> The Rt. Hon. W. M. Hughes, Prime Minister of Australia, 1915-23.

<sup>4</sup> d. 1926.

<sup>5</sup> Member of War Cabinet, 1916-18; Sec. for War, 1918-19; Sec. for Colonies, 1919-21; d. 1925.

to France. Spicer and I saw Milner and Cowans,<sup>1</sup> and it was agreed that so many tons a day should be dispatched. I impressed on Milner that all publications must have an equal chance, and to this he agreed. In the result, some 5,000,000 papers were sent free to the troops. Every paper dealing with politics or news had the opportunity of sending copies.

8TH.—Dined with the P.M., Kerr and Miss Stevenson.<sup>2</sup>

Much talk of possible break-up of Germany. Kerr prophesies chaos. L. G. and I think not. We shall see.

Northcliffe wired yesterday to L. G., saying that he understood the French and Italians had prepared their indemnity claims, and enquiring why we had failed to do so. L. G. replied, "It is untrue. The Allies are acting together."

We talked of the Communist Parliamentary candidates.

L. G. : I would like to see some of them in the House of Commons. That is the place for them to ventilate their opinions. They are better in than out.

L. G. thinks he may have a majority of 150. He asked what I thought. My estimate is 169.

15TH.—Dined with L. G., who said he feels pretty well worn out, although he did not show it. He says that if he does not get a majority of 120 he will feel badly treated.<sup>3</sup> We talked of the new Ministry if he is returned.

L. G. : The Labour man in office is a failure. He does not understand business. When discussing the subject with Bonar Law, I said, "I will have no man in the Ministry who is not fit for his work." B. L. replied, "Well, how do you justify the Labour men?" I said, "I admit the justice of your criticism, but they are not Ministers because they are the most suitable men, but because they represent a large class, who should have a voice in the government of the country." I have offered the position of Minister of Labour or Demobilisation to Eric Geddes,<sup>4</sup> but he has declined. I really don't know whom to

<sup>1</sup> Gen. Sir John Cowans, Quartermaster-General, 1912-19; d. 1921.

<sup>2</sup> Two of Mr. Lloyd George's secretaries. Mr. Kerr is now Marquess of Lothian.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Lloyd George was in fact returned with a majority of 263 seats.

<sup>4</sup> Now Sir Eric Geddes; First Lord of the Admiralty, 1917-18; Minister without Portfolio, 1919; Minister of Transport, 1919-21.

appoint. Andrew Weir<sup>1</sup> might do, but he is not in the House of Commons. Then I shall have to find a new Chancellor of the Exchequer and Home Secretary. But of this I am certain : I shall have to make some extensive changes in the Government. Milner will not go on after Peace is declared, so I shall have to fill his place.

22ND.—Lunched with General Botha<sup>2</sup> and Sir Abe Bailey<sup>3</sup> at Walton Heath. The former, a big, calm, wise man. He said he had urged L. G. not to quarrel with Wilson,<sup>4</sup> and had suggested that before the Peace Conference a meeting should take place between L. G., Clemenceau<sup>5</sup> and Wilson in order to agree upon a policy.

In reference to the League of Nations, Botha said, " I shall support the proposal, but I do not see how it is to be carried out. Wilson's point as to the freedom of the seas is nonsense, and I hope he will see that it is. Our object must be to bind Britain and America together. That will make for the peace of the world. We must make the Germans pay, but we must take care not to keep an open sore in the middle of Europe. It is surprising what the vanity and foolishness of one man can accomplish. The Kaiser has ruined himself and his people. I said that to the King. The Armistice terms were humiliating. I felt sorry, when I read them, that any nation should stoop so low as to accept such terms. Even barbarians will not surrender their cattle without a struggle. It would have been more dignified had the Germans said, ' We will not agree to your terms. You must do what you think best.' German East Africa is an impossible country for white men. West Africa, on the other hand, is a place where whites can live. In East Africa the Germans trained and armed 8,000,000 natives, hoping thereby to dominate South Africa. In the West they exterminated the natives in order to settle the country with Germans. The plan was well thought out. It will be many years before East Africa can be cultivated, but the soil is fertile. We must hold

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord Weir ; Sec. for Air, 1918.

<sup>2</sup> The Rt. Hon. Louis Botha, Premier of South Africa ; d. 1919.

<sup>3</sup> The South African mine-owner.

<sup>4</sup> President Wilson ; d. 1924.

<sup>5</sup> Georges Clemenceau, French Premier ; d. 1929.



East Africa because of its dominating position. The Americans do not understand that. The situation must be explained to Wilson."

R. : You had a tough time in the early part of the war.

BOTHA : A very anxious time. De La Rey, De Wet and Beyers<sup>1</sup> had great influence. De La Rey was shot by accident, which was most unfortunate. Beyers resigned in a treasonable and treacherous way. I called together thirty-five of my old commandants and made them a speech. I explained the position and asked if fifteen of them would volunteer to take command. The answer was to request me to select the fifteen, and I was told that the remainder would serve as privates. I was then able to tell my Cabinet that I felt confident regarding the future. I knew what influence the thirty-five wielded in the country.

R. : What did you say in your speech ? It was historic !

BOTHA : I kept no record. I explained the position of the war and that the Germans were certain to be defeated in the end. I said that the future of South Africa depended upon the continuance of our relations with Great Britain. While I was in the midst of my troubles, a friend sent me a cartoon cut from a paper which showed a dog pursuing a cat. The descriptive matter read, "Life is one damned thing after another !" I enjoyed that cartoon. It was so appropriate.

R. : Did your sleep suffer during all your anxieties ?

BOTHA : No, I am a good sleeper.

ABE BAILEY : I was with him when the news arrived of the defection of almost all his followers. He was just as calm and placid as he is to-day.

BOTHA : I did not perhaps show what I felt. It was an anxious time.

CHRISTMAS DAY.—Played golf in the morning with L. G. and then with him to mid-day Christmas dinner, he carving the turkey in great style. After dinner sat and talked for some time and listened to the piano. L. G. slept for three hours and I went for a short walk, returning in the evening for supper.

L. G. spoke in high terms of Botha. I said "He is one of

<sup>1</sup> Three Boer generals who rebelled against the South African Government on the outbreak of the World War.

the six great men in the world—Foch, Clemenceau, L. G., Wilson, Botha and Venizelos.”<sup>1</sup> L. G. laughed, and said, “I suppose you are right.” He says that Smuts<sup>2</sup> has written a memorandum on the League of Nations which he, L. G., thinks the ablest state paper he has seen during the war. He promised to let me see it. He referred to one phrase. Smuts says, “Mankind are on the march. You cannot say whither they are journeying.” (And they don’t know themselves. R.)

L. G. : That is very fine.

R. : An analogy drawn from Smuts’ environment in South Africa. He has been accustomed to see men trekking away, perhaps with no definite objective.

L. G. : That is just what occurred to me when I read the sentence.

L. G. (referring to an interview) : It represents me as a sort of God amongst men. What nonsense !

I asked L. G. whether Haig shows much trace of the war.

L. G. : No. He takes great care of himself. He is very ostentatious. I hear he had a great reception,<sup>3</sup> but I did not see the crowd. I did not think we should be welcoming the Generals back this Christmas. I thought the war would last longer. Hankey<sup>4</sup> and I did not doubt that we should ultimately win, but he thought we should not gain a military victory. I thought we should. I should have been glad to see us enter Germany by force of arms, but the losses entailed on our side would have been too severe. The question arose at the Armistice Conference as to whether we should in the final resort insist on the delivery of the German ships. Foch said, “No, if it means condemning 150,000 more men to death. The ships are not worth the sacrifice.” Luckily the Germans agreed to our terms. Haig strongly advised us to make peace at the end of last year, and was in favour of accepting much less stringent terms in November when the Germans broke down.

<sup>1</sup> Eleutherios Venizelos, Prime Minister of Greece at intervals from 1910 onwards.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. the Rt. Hon. Jan Smuts ; Imperial War Cabinet, 1917-18 ; Plenipotentiary at Peace Conference, 1919.

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We talked of the elections. I gave L. G. three sets of figures, one prepared by Cornwall, the assistant Whip,<sup>1</sup> showing a Coalition majority of 169, one prepared by Guest,<sup>2</sup> showing, I think, a majority of 190 ditto, and one prepared by Boraston of the Conservative Office,<sup>3</sup> showing a majority of 220. I favoured 169. L. G. thought 150. He said that next week he proposes to take a short holiday to consider the reconstruction of the Government. The difficulty is that there are so few men available. He is very doubtful about a Minister of Labour and a Minister of Agriculture. Addison<sup>4</sup> is to do the Housing. I said, "Of course you will find a place for Horne.<sup>5</sup> He is a clever fellow."

L. G. : Yes, I think I shall put him in the Cabinet. He is an able man.

R. : How about Winston ? How about the Colonies for him ?

L. G. : There will be nothing doing in that department. It would be like condemning a man to be head of a mausoleum. He would just have to see that it was kept clean.

R. : I don't agree. The Colonies will offer many problems. The Office wants bucking up and it would be a splendid thing if the Minister were to make a tour of Empire.

L. G. : Yes, I agree about that. The Colonial Office might be a good place for Winston.

<sup>1</sup> The Rt. Hon. Sir Edwin Cornwall, Bart.

<sup>2</sup> The Rt. Hon. F. E. Guest, Patronage Sec. to the Treasury, 1917-21.

<sup>3</sup> Sir John Boraston, Chief Unionist Agent, 1912-20 ; d. 1920.

<sup>4</sup> The Rt. Hon. Christopher Addison, first Minister of Health, 1919-21.

<sup>5</sup> The Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Horne, Minister of Labour, 1919 ; Pres. Board of Trade, 1920-21.

## Chapter II

*The Peace Conference opens—Foch and the Germans—The birth of the League—Winston urges intervention in Russia—A Newspaper attack on the British delegates.*

JANUARY 18TH, 1919.—The Peace Conference opens this afternoon. I called on Lord Derby, our Ambassador, at about 10.30. He said he had not seen the Prime Minister. We discussed certain Press matters. I said, "Are you going to the opening of the Conference?" He replied, "No. I have nothing to do with it, except to summon the British delegates."

Attended opening meeting of Peace Conference. I sat just behind L. G., Balfour, Bonar Law and Barnes.<sup>1</sup> All the speeches had been prepared except those of Clemenceau and Lloyd George. Owing to a mistake, the latter did not arrive until Poincaré<sup>2</sup> was half way through his speech. When L. G. arrived, Hankey handed him a note saying that he would have to make a speech seconding the motion to make Clemenceau permanent Chairman. Notwithstanding the mess-up, L. G. made an admirable speech, which took everybody's fancy.

When having tea, I had a chat with President Wilson, who said he thought Poincaré's speech very fine, and that it contained some eloquent passages. I said it was more like an essay than a speech. He agreed. We talked of the French people. I mentioned the coat-of-arms of the City of Paris—a ship with a Latin inscription underneath: (in English) "It often rolls but it never sinks." I said this was symbolic of the French nation. The President said the motto was new to him, and that he was much interested by it. He agreed that the motto was symbolic of France. We spoke of increased Press representation at the full Conference. I suggested it might be possible to arrange for 30 instead of 15. He said he saw no objection to this and would support the proposal.

<sup>1</sup> The Rt. Hon. G. N. Barnes; member of War Cabinet, 1917.

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...TH.—F. E. Smith<sup>1</sup> and Chilcott, M.P., his friend,<sup>2</sup> came to my rooms for an hour. The former very charming and affectionate and full of his new position (Lord Chancellor). He is a delightful companion and quite unspoiled by success. He talked of our long friendship. He also talked much of his excursions as Censor. He seemed quite oblivious of the criticisms that have been levelled at his appointment. The Nelsonian blind eye is a valuable asset for a public man.

...TH.—Dinner with L. G., Bonar Law and Henry Wilson.<sup>3</sup> Much talk about labour. I said, "The world is demanding a revaluation of human effort. People are asking whether one millionaire is worth more to the world than, say, five thousand coal miners or engine drivers, or whether one Lord Chancellor is of equal value to a hundred sea captains, schoolmasters or professors. The workers are not asking for equality. They are demanding what they regard as justice. The hodmen of the world, who do its rough work, are determined to have a better show." Bonar Law was pleased with this point of view. L. G. commented on the difference between the situation of the wealthy and the poor. He sympathises with the workers' point of view much more than he did last summer. Bonar Law said he spent a week-end at Curzon's<sup>4</sup> some time ago, and the conversation turned on the changed conditions of the various classes. B. L. remarked to Curzon, "Three hundred years ago I should have been a serf on one of your estates!" L. G. laughed and said, "I should not have been a serf. I should have been a rebel!" The conversation also turned on the new Government.

L. G. : Well, just let me ask R. what the popular view is.

R. : The criticism is chiefly directed against certain members of the Government (mentioning them by name).

L. G. : There you are ! They are not mine ! They are yours, Bonar !

<sup>1</sup> Later Earl of Birkenhead ; d. 1930.

<sup>2</sup> Later Sir Warden Chilcott ; M.P. for Walton, 1918-29.

<sup>3</sup> Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson ; Chief of Imperial General Staff and member of War Cabinet ; d. 1922.

<sup>4</sup> The Marquess Curzon, Foreign Secretary and leader of the House of Lords, 1916-24 ; d. 1925.



In the course of the talk, L. G. said to Bonar Law, "You know I was prepared to serve under you. I was willing to take second place."

B. L. : It would not have worked. You may have thought it would, but it would not.

L. G. : I served under Asquith and we had no quarrels or misunderstandings until the end, and those were due to the foolish advice he received from his so-called friends.

R. : That is different. It is one thing to take second place when you have not held the first, and another to be subordinate when you have been supreme.

B. L. : That is quite true. It would have been a failure.

Reading<sup>1</sup> invited me to lunch twice while he was here. He has had a rough time with the Americans over the food question. Reading remarked, "Things between L. G. and Wilson are very different from what they were when you, L. G., and I walked up the hill at Danny that Sunday morning."<sup>2</sup> L. G. talks very differently about him."

21ST (TUESDAY).—Dinner at L. G.'s. Bonar Law, Admiral Browning<sup>3</sup> and General Bridges<sup>4</sup> were there. The Admiral gave an interesting account of the Armistice Conference and of his trip to Germany. He said that Foch treated the Germans with courtesy, but was very firm. Nothing could have been better than his management of the interviews. The Germans opened the discussion by saying, "We have come to hear your terms." Foch replied, "There are no terms." It therefore became necessary for the Germans to ask for an armistice, and until they did so, clearly and emphatically, Foch would not discuss the terms or conditions. The Admiral said that the French want the left bank of the Rhine.

L. G. : Very naturally. They are on their hind legs. They

<sup>1</sup> Now Marquess of Reading; Lord Chief Justice, 1913-21; High Commissioner and Special Ambassador to U.S.A., 1918.

<sup>2</sup> In October 1918, shortly after President Wilson had issued his Peace Note without consultation with the Allies. Danny was a house in Sussex taken by Lord Riddell for the summer.

<sup>3</sup> President Allied Naval Armistice Commission, 1918-19; Second Sea Lord, 1919-20.

<sup>4</sup> Head of British War Missions in U.S.A., 1918; British Mission Allied Armies of the Orient, 1918-20.

have escaped from the Germans. They have annihilated their foe. Their nightmare is over. Now they are very imperial in spirit, and I should think they want to maintain a big army. Old Foch does not believe in Leagues of Nations. He wants to make sure that his dear country that he loves so much is going to be safe and sound for all time. And one can't blame him when one looks at the havoc wrought by the Germans—the things we saw last Sunday.

At 10 o'clock L. G. retired to talk over business matters with B. L., who is returning to London to take charge during L. G.'s absence. I had a talk with Browning and Bridges, and both spoke, as most officers do, about the inadequate pay received by sailors and soldiers of all classes. Browning has lost an arm and Bridges a leg. A few days ago when the latter was travelling on a railway trolley in the East, it collided with a railway engine. The man managing the trolley who was seated next to Bridges was killed, but nothing happened to Bridges beyond the smashing of his wooden leg. This seemed to amuse him immensely.

B. L. has his own opinions and pretty strong ones, and is not afraid of expressing them, but he does so in a gentle, unassuming way and by his tone and manner always indicates that L. G. is the head of the show. For example, I saw that B. L. did not quite agree with certain of L. G.'s views, but he did not say much by way of criticism. Barnes told me on Sunday that L. G.'s optimism and high spirits during the bad time in March, April, May, June and July were extraordinary. When things looked as bad as they could, he was always bright and always ready with some fresh expedient and always prepared to fight his battles in the House of Commons and elsewhere.

22ND.—Long chat with Bernard Baruch, Head of the United States War Board,<sup>1</sup> and Swope of the *New York World*. Baruch says he is strongly in favour of getting rid of all Government restrictions and thinks it absolutely necessary that the world should get to work again at once. He strongly urges the early settlement of peace terms with Germany, Austria, etc., or at any rate the settlement of the economic

<sup>1</sup> Later a member of the Supreme Economic Council.

terms, so as to free raw materials, etc.. He thinks that the blockade must be raised in whole or in part to enable the Germans to feed themselves by making use of their mercantile credits in the Argentine, etc.. He says that Wilson has offered him the Treasuryship of the United States, but that he has declined, as he thinks Wilson's position would be made more difficult if the Treasurer were a mercantile man and a Jew, as Baruch is. He said, "I want nothing and prefer to get back to civil life." He is strongly impressed with the intention of the working classes of the world to have more. He says, "So far as I am concerned, I am prepared to give up voluntarily, through the medium of taxation, a very large part of my income. I am convinced that, unless the wealthier classes take that course, they may have everything taken from them."

*Wednesday night*

Dined with L. G., Hankey, Ian Malcolm,<sup>1</sup> Basil Thomson<sup>2</sup> and one or two more were there. I said to him quietly, "To-day's *communiqué* was well stage-managed. President Wilson puts forward the Russian proposal, which might receive considerable opposition in certain sections of the British Press, while the *communiqué* announces that on Saturday the League of Nations will be considered on the basis proposed by Mr. Lloyd George, thus relieving him and Great Britain of the imputation of being luke-warm on the subject." He laughed and said, "You are quite right!" but disclaimed responsibility. Hankey remarked (to L. G.), "That is the first time we have mentioned names in the *communiqué*, and I don't think we had better continue the practice."

L. G. : No. I think it would be a mistake.

[Note. The President is a quaint bird. This afternoon he came from the Conference Room and gave instructions for someone to telephone for his typewriter. We conjured up visions of a beautiful American stenographer, but in a short time a messenger appeared, bringing with him a battered typewriter on a tray. By this time the Conference had finished. The typewriter was placed in a corner of the Conference Room

<sup>1</sup> Sir Ian Malcolm, private secretary to Mr. Balfour at Peace Conference.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Basil Thomson, Director of Intelligence, Metropolitan Police, 1919-21.

and the President proceeded to tap out a long memorandum, the purport of which had been decided upon by him and his colleagues. It was a strange sight to see one of the greatest rulers in the world working away in this fashion. R.]

23RD.—Hearing that the Americans are issuing semi-official secret announcements as to subjects to be discussed by the Conference, saw L. G. and urged him to arrange for similar documents to be issued to the British Press. I showed him one of the American *communiqués*. After reading it, he said it was obvious we must do the same and that he would give the necessary instructions. He also said that we have done more in the way of preparations than the Americans. For example, draft proposals regarding the League of Nations have been prepared by Smuts and Lord Phillimore.<sup>1</sup> Wilson is very pleased with these and proposes to make them the basis of the constitution of the League. Then in the matter of labour, we have prepared an elaborate case.

Subsequently I saw Sir William Tyrrell and explained the matter to him. He said he would do what he could if he received instructions, but that I should be more likely to get L. G.'s consent than he would. In this connection it may be noted that all the important work seems to be done by Hankey and his staff, supplemented by Kerr. It looks as if the Foreign Office had prepared an enormous amount of material that is of no use, or at any rate is never used.

25TH.—Long talk with McCormick and Sheldon of the United States Mission. They confirmed what Baruch had said. They think the delay in settling the economic terms with the enemy most serious, as the effect is to prevent the resumption of industry and commerce in the Allied countries. Merchants will not order goods, and manufacturers will not start new industries until they know what the economic terms with the enemy will be. The subject of raw materials is vital and pressing. Everyone is waiting for a fall in the markets. McCormick and Sheldon said that all restrictions should be removed and that markets should be allowed to resume their natural level. But they say this cannot happen until the peace terms have been settled. McCormick had to go. After he left I had a

<sup>1</sup>Lord Justice of Appeal; d. 1929.

further talk with Sheldon, who told me that there has been a good deal of friction between Reading and Hoover.<sup>1</sup>

26TH (SUNDAY).—To Amiens by car with the P.M. and party. Lunched at Foch's old headquarters, a ruined château. L. G. showed me the room where he lunched with Foch when the latter was residing there. I drove in the same car with Winston, who spoke much of the Bolsheviks, against whom he is very bitter. He would like military intervention in Russia by means of British, French and American volunteers. I said the British public would not agree to their Government organising another war in order to interfere with the domestic affairs of Russia. Winston agreed, but said their view might alter. I said I saw no prospect of such a change.

WINSTON : The war is over. I mean the period of joint united effort for a common purpose. It will never recur. Now we are all fighting each other again. I want to build up the nation with the gallant men who have fought together. I want them to form the basis of a great national effort. I want them to combine to make an even greater England.

R. : But now-a-days they will want something more than high-sounding phrases. They will want better conditions and they will not submit to vast disparities between the conditions of individuals. The men who do the hodwork of the world mean to assert themselves. They are sick of promises.

Winston agreed, and spoke strongly in favour of better conditions—cheap houses, higher wages, etc.. He spoke frankly about himself. He says that he has learned much in the war ; that he can speak better and more easily than before. He chaffed me about being a teetotaller and laughingly insisted on the merits of a reasonable quantity of strong drink. " It alters " (said Winston) " one's outlook on life. At the end of a troublesome, gloomy day it makes things look happier and it is invaluable as an adjunct to oratory and social intercourse." I reminded him that Falstaff had expressed similar views in more detail. Winston said that he is often gloomy and abstracted when thinking things out. I said, " It does not do to look so. This is the smiling age. In former days, statesmen

<sup>1</sup> Herbert Clark Hoover, Chairman of Belgian Relief Commission, 1914-19 ; Food Administrator, U.S.A., 1917-19 ; President, 1929-33.

were depicted as solemn, stately individuals with the cares of the world on their shoulders. To-day, the smile is in fashion. The Lloyd George smile ; the Wilson smile, and so on. Even great sailors and soldiers are depicted smiling." Winston said that he had had a happy life on the whole. Now he was happier than he had ever been before. "My life," said he, "has been one constant struggle and fight." He spoke much of L. G., whom he described as a delightful companion ; a man with unerring judgment, etc.. (It was not always thus, but one could hardly expect it.) Winston said that he never bore malice, and never believed unfriendly things reported to have been said of him by his friends. He thinks that Asquith is done. He missed his tide, and should have become Lord Chancellor when L. G. formed his first Government. Winston says Asquith was ruined by his friends.

We started at 9 and returned at 6.30, having motored some two hundred miles. L. G.'s energy amazing. He was always ready to get out of the car and visit anything interesting. Winston pointed with emotion, as we drove, to the little lonely cemeteries, and remarked, "Poor fellows! I wish they had lived to see the end of the war!"

30TH.—A great disturbance due to a newspaper article suggesting that the British delegates of the Home Government have been kow-towing to Wilson ; that they have been giving away the case of the Colonies ; that the Colonies resent this and that there is serious fear of the British Empire breaking up in consequence. The writer of the article called. He said it was based on information received from three Colonial statesmen—Hughes, Botha and Sir Joseph Ward.<sup>1</sup> He had shown them the proof, and they had inserted or suggested the sentence regarding the disruption of the Empire. He also said he had seen E. S. Montagu, M.P.,<sup>2</sup> for an hour and that he had approved the article. He said he had called to see Davies, L. G.'s secretary, and had asked for an interview with L. G., but this had been refused. He said he wanted to know what L. G.'s views were and was quite willing to be guided by them. He requested me to see L. G. and find out what he thought.

<sup>1</sup> New Zealand's representative in Imperial War Cabinet ; d. 1930.

<sup>2</sup> Sec. for India, 1917-22 ; d. 1924.



MR. LLOYD GEORGE AND LORD RIDDELL AT THE  
PEACE CONFERENCE IN PARIS

with Hughes. They were loud in their admiration of the article and in their objections to the mandatory principle—quite violent in fact. Then I saw Montagu, who also complained of the article. I had been told that he had approved. Which version is correct, it is difficult to say.

Later, I saw the P.M., who was highly indignant concerning the article. He said it had made his task to-day very difficult. He also said that President Wilson had protested against it and the disclosure of information, and had stated that if this sort of thing was repeated, he would break off the Conference and go back to America.

Dined with the P.M. in the evening, taking with me Baruch, McCormick and Sheldon of the American War Trade Department, and Swope, the journalist connected with the Department.



## Chapter III

*L. G. on his relations with Wilson and Clemenceau—The advantages and disadvantages of intoxicants—Reshuffling the Cabinet—The U.S. and the war debts burden—Growing labour troubles.*

FEBRUARY 1ST, 1919.—Dined with the P.M., who gave an amusing account of some of Clemenceau's observations at the Peace Conference. The question of the disposition of Heligoland arose, whereupon Clemenceau remarked, pointing to Wilson, "He will hand it over to the League of Nations." When Constantinople was under discussion, Clemenceau said, turning to Wilson, "When you cease to be President we will make you Grand Turk."

R. : Did Wilson appreciate the joke ?

L. G. : No, I don't think he did. He doesn't care to be chaffed, but tells good stories sometimes. For example, when a question arose whether we should take notice of something that had happened, he told a story of a meeting of college professors in reference to some act of misconduct by one of the pupils. One professor insisted upon the culprit's being punished, saying, in support of his plea, "God has given us eyes." "Yes," said one of his colleagues, "and eyelids also !" L. G. says Clemenceau does not believe in the League of Nations.

Wilson made an unfortunate speech at the Conference the day before yesterday. He himself felt it to be so unfortunate that he asked that it should be deleted from the *procès-verbal*, which was done.

L. G. says that he deals direct with Wilson and not through a go-between. "No go-between is necessary," said L. G. "In momentous affairs it is better to deal direct, and there is a perfect understanding between Wilson and me. We discuss questions with the utmost freedom, and when the proceedings are being conducted in French frequently talk aside in English

about subjects which arise for discussion. I have," said he, "a difficulty in dealing with Clemenceau. He never goes out to lunch or dinner, so that I must always make a formal appointment with him. That has its disadvantages. If you meet for social purposes, you can raise a point. If you find that you are progressing satisfactorily, you can proceed, otherwise you can drop it. Much business can be done in that manner. Clemenceau has no associate with whom I can talk. He treats Pichon<sup>1</sup> as if he were his clerk or manager. Pichon is frightened to death of the old boy, who is certainly very terrifying and a remarkable person in every way."

4TH.—Dined with the Attorney-General, Sir Gordon Hewart, the Solicitor-General, Sir Ernest Pollock, and H. W. Chilcott, M.P.. Long talk about proceedings against persons responsible for breaches of the laws of war. The A.-G. is clever, acute and courteous. He has a remarkable gift of felicitous expression in conversation. He never coins a badly constructed sentence. The S.-G. is an able, sagacious sort of man—very kindly. They both told some good legal stories.

. . . TH.—Dined with L. G.. Reading there also. Found L. G. and R. busy conferring as to the latter's retirement from the chairmanship of the Supply Council. I waited until they had finished. R. is going to America for a time, and on his return will resume his work in the Law Courts. The conversation turned on Wilson. L. G. said he had found him much nicer and had got on with him much better than he expected, whereupon R. remarked, "That is a great satisfaction to me. Nothing is more important than that you two should get on well together." In saying this he was obviously sincere, but gave me the impression that though glad to see the birth of a strong and lusty friendship he regretted that the services of the midwife had been so soon dispensed with by the parents.

I drew attention to the similarity between Wilson and Chamberlain. Reading thought Wilson a bigger man than Joe. L. G., on the contrary, thought Joe the abler man of the two.

We had an amusing talk about intoxicating drinks.

RIDDELL : As I have often told you (L. G.), a sober world

<sup>1</sup> French Foreign Minister ; d. 1933.

will be a critical world. It will demand its rights. A sober world will be a revolutionary world. It will not do to be too sudden in your changes. Reforms are best made by laying on coats of varnish. The world is not yet ready to abandon strong drinks. Let the improvement of the people's position go hand in hand with an extension of temperance.

L. G. : I agree. I often wonder, if you took a debtor and creditor account of the advantages and disadvantages to the world of alcoholic drinks, how the balance would come out. On the one side you would have to put a vast amount of squalor, misery and crime, but on the other a still greater amount of happiness, contentment, pleasurable anticipation and excitement. On the whole, I think I should find the balance in favour of liquor.

READING : I don't agree. I think of all the horrid cases due to drink which come before the Courts.

RIDDELL : Yes, but on the other hand think of the millions of people who every day enjoy a glass or two of beer or wine with their meals or during the evening.

8TH.—Returned from Paris with L. G., family and suite. He slept most of the way to Boulogne. On the way from Dover, after reading *The Times* account of the Polish pogroms, he remarked, "The Bolsheviks have done nothing worse than that ! It is a terrible story, which proves that savagery is an incident in most revolutionary movements in such countries." He referred also to the labour situation in England, and gave me the idea that he viewed the future with grave apprehension. His responsibilities are enough to make the stoutest heart quail. His elder daughter spoke of bringing her baby to London. He objected and said there might be riots and that the child had better stay where she was. Reading, who travelled with us, looked ill, and was suffering from gout.

16TH.—Dined with L. G. at Walton. Found him busy dictating cablegrams to two of his secretaries.

L. G. : Winston is in Paris. He wants to conduct a war against the Bolsheviks. That *would* cause a revolution ! Our people would not permit it. Here, let me read you something from this book. (*Uncensored Celebrities* by E. T. Raymond.<sup>1</sup>)

<sup>1</sup> Edward Raymond Thompson, Ed., *Evening Standard*, 1923-28; d. 1928.

I wonder who the author is? It is a remarkable book. (He then read long extracts with comments, his chief favourite being the article on the Webbs.<sup>1</sup> He said, "They are quaint people, but clever, and often make excellent suggestions.")

We spoke of the new House of Commons.

L. G. : It is a curious assembly. Quite different from any other House of Commons I have known. When I was speaking, I felt, as I looked in front of me, that I was addressing a Trade Union Congress. Then when I turned round, I felt as if I were speaking to a Chamber of Commerce. It will be interesting to see how it acts.

The conversation then turned on the Cabinet.

L. G. : I don't know whom to select for the Board of Trade. What do you think of Sir James Stevenson?<sup>2</sup>

R. : I got you to put him into the Ministry of Munitions, where he did well, but I doubt whether he is suitable for this position. He has had no Parliamentary experience.

L. G. : Yes, I agree. But whom can you suggest? I can think of no one. Come now, tell me, who is there?

R. : How about Auckland Geddes?<sup>3</sup>

L. G. : I had thought of him. He would do the job well, I think.

R. : He has the advantage of being in the House of Commons. It would be well to select a H. of C. man. Worthington-Evans<sup>4</sup> would be suitable.

L. G. : I cannot move him from the Pensions—a difficult and important office.

We spoke of the industrial situation. I referred to the necessity of releasing raw materials without delay, so that manufacturers could get to work. Now they are afraid to make purchases, as they fear a falling market.

We also spoke of increasing the death duties.

L. G. : There is much to be said for that in our present situation, burdened as we are with a colossal debt, which

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord and Lady Passfield.

<sup>2</sup> Later Lord Stevenson; d. 1926.

<sup>3</sup> Now Sir Auckland Geddes; Min. of Reconstruction, 1919; Pres. Board of Trade, 1919-20.

<sup>4</sup> Sir Laming Worthington-Evans; Minister of Pensions, 1919-20; d. 1931.

demands for its service a greater revenue than our pre war taxation. I think it would be a fair thing to take 50 per cent. of the larger fortunes as death duties. I have always been a death duty man. Death is the most convenient time to tax rich people. The money must be found, and it must be provided in the easiest possible way. There is much to be said for a 50 per cent. inheritance duty.

R. : A scheme has been propounded whereby the Americans would forgo the debts due to them from the Allies. The Americans are being allowed a voice in the Peace Conference far beyond what their sacrifices justify. They might well pay their footing, and bear a larger portion of the cost of the war.

L. G. : That is a good idea, and I believe they might adopt it.

R. : The amount per head of the American population would not be great. When I go to Paris I shall put this before the American journalists.

In discussing the prices of food, L. G. remarked, "Personally I would sooner have butter than meat. If I can get plenty of good butter, I can do without meat quite well."

We spoke of Beaverbrook,<sup>1</sup> who has just had an operation for a mysterious disease which comes from sucking straws. I suppose he engaged in this habit when a boy in Canada. L. G. said that as a boy he (L. G.) caught the disease—the symptoms being a swelling of the glands. "I was cured," he remarked, "by a simple remedy. My jaws were smeared with a compound of lard and soot, which made me look like a nigger minstrel, but the stuff cured me."

22ND.—My suggestions for a memorial service at St. Paul's for the journalists who lost their lives in the war were warmly taken up by the various newspaper associations. I undertook the task of organising it. The service took place to-day. It was very impressive. L. G. drove me to Walton Heath. Found him in great form, although he seemed tired.

I said, "The story goes that when Wilson left for America, someone asked Clemenceau what he thought of him. Clemenceau replied, 'He is a nice man and means well.'"

L. G. : The old dog (C.) does not believe in all these

<sup>1</sup> Lord Beaverbrook, the newspaper proprietor.

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new-fangled schemes. He thinks the world will go on much as before, and you can't really alter things. Well, Wilson has gone back home with a bundle of assignats. I have returned with a pocket full of sovereigns in the shape of the German Colonies, Mesopotamia, etc.. Everyone to his taste.

R. : How is A. J. Balfour doing at the Conference ?

L. G. : Quite well, but he is settling nothing. No real progress is being made. When I get back I must get some decisions. I shall not wait for Wilson. I hope Clemenceau will be able to attend the Conference when I return. (Clemenceau was shot one day this week.<sup>1</sup>)

R. : The sooner the Peace is signed the better for the world at large. Trade is being strangled. Raw materials are being held up. Traders are afraid to buy as they fear a falling market. Everything is uncertain.

L. G. : I quite agree. My object is an early Peace, but I had to come here owing to the labour situation. The prospects in that respect are very uncertain.

R. : It looks as if civilisation as we know it may be severely shaken.

L. G. : The next five years will be a very trying time for the world. Civilisation in its present form may be severely strained.

23RD.—Dined with L. G.. Found him hard at work dictating his speech to introduce the Coal Mining Commission Bill. He said that the speech had required very careful preparation. Every word would be of importance. He thought Smillie<sup>2</sup> made quite a good speech at the Miners' Conference on Friday—dignified and not provocative. L. G. says he ought to take at least two days to prepare his speech for the great trade conference on Thursday, but is so pressed with other matters that he cannot spare the time. He again referred to his responsibilities and anxieties, and remarked, "If I had considered my own happiness and my place in history, I should have resigned when the Armistice was signed, but I could not do it. I was bound to go on."

We spoke of Lord Robert Cecil.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Feb. 19th, by a degenerate called Cottin.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Smillie, President of the Miners' Federation, 1912-21.

<sup>3</sup> Now Viscount Cecil of Chelwood.

L. G. : He has greatly improved his position during the war. He is ambitious, and like the Cecils, fond of power.

R. : He is very courteous and has the crusading instinct strongly developed. Like most crusaders and idealists, he has an amiable touch of vanity. (Laughing) You have a little touch of it yourself !

L. G. (laughing heartily) : It may be so, but I had not noticed it.

Later L. G. spoke of Mark Sykes,<sup>1</sup> who died last week in Paris.

L. G. : He was a worried, anxious man. That was the cause of his death. He had no reserves of energy. He was responsible for the agreement which is causing us all the trouble with the French. We call it the "Sykes-P." agreement. Sykes negotiated it for us with Picot, the Frenchman, who got the better of him.<sup>2</sup> Sykes saw the difficulties in which he had placed us, and was very worried in consequence. I said something to him about the agreement, and at once saw how I had cut him. I am sorry. I wish I had said nothing. I blame myself. He did his best. I did not wish to emphasise his mistake or to make him more miserable. I did not know until I spoke to him that he had taken the matter so much to heart. That is one of the difficulties of a man in my position.

R. : Life is so rapid, and there are so many tasks that it is impossible to weigh beforehand the effect of every chance word.

L. G. : That is true. Other things crowd in on one, and one forgets.

L. G. sang Welsh hymns with great vigour, lying back in his chair with his eyes shut. He gave us some stories of Welsh preachers with much dramatic effect—his rendering of some of their sermons very fine. He told of a preacher who when preaching on the text, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin," so manipulated his hands and the light, previously arranged, that the words appeared in shadow on the white-washed walls of the chapel, with most dramatic effect.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Mark Sykes, M.P. (U.) Central Hull, 1911-19; d. 1919.

<sup>2</sup> This agreement, signed in May 1916, gave the French virtually complete control of the Syrian coast and a veiled protectorate over the interior.



28TH (Am not sure of exact date).—Long talk with the Lord Chancellor, who spoke much about his future. I said that he ought to carry out some really solid legal reforms that would enhance his reputation. For some years past no Lord Chancellor had done anything of the sort, so that he had a wonderful opportunity of going down in history as a great legal reformer. He said he was considering a great scheme for assimilating the law of real and personal property, and is evidently very anxious to make a name for himself in the direction indicated. He spoke strongly about the terrible public expense. He said, "The war is over, and yet we are spending  $4\frac{1}{2}$  millions per day. Everyone should do his utmost to put a stop to this."

## Chapter IV

*L. G.'s attitude towards Labour—President Wilson's position in America—Famine conditions in the Occupied Territory—The new German Army—L. G.'s difficulties with the Tories.*

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, MARCH 1ST AND 2ND, 1919.—  
SATURDAY. Drove with L. G. to Walton Heath, where we unched and golfed.

Much talk about the labour disputes. L. G. thought the Labour Conference most interesting. He said that notwithstanding much wild talk, the Conference displayed the sterling common sense of the British people. Referring to his own speech, he said, "I got them with me during the last five minutes. Ernest Bevin, the dock-labourers' representative, saw this. He is a powerful fellow, and a born leader. He got up and tried to remove the impression, but was too violent. A thing of this sort has to be done in a good-tempered way. But, mark my words, you will hear more of Bevin!"

When talking of the experiences of life, I said, "You have had a wonderful life!"

L. G. : Yes. In a way, more wonderful than Disraeli's.

R. : Full of romance, work and battle.

L. G. : Yes. Plenty of battle and ups and downs.

He has sold his house at Walton Heath and is going to live at Esher, about 25 minutes' drive from Walton Heath.

L. G. : Walton Heath will become historic. Great decisions were made there. When seated in the verandah of my house, Venizelos and I determined to depose Constantine.<sup>1</sup> Then the unified command was settled at Walton between General Wilson, Haig, Milner and myself. Many other decisions were made there. I can't remember them all now.

The conversation turned on President Wilson's position in America. L. G. remarked, "The Republicans are attacking him in the most unscrupulous manner. Formerly they

<sup>1</sup> In June 1917.

attacked him because he was anti-British. Now they are attacking him because he is pro-British. They will stick at nothing to 'out' him. I like him. He may be vain, but, as old Clemenceau says, he means well. Now we must get away to the Peace Conference, finish the job and get the world back to work. Conditions are more settled here at the moment. Paris is now weighing down the scale."

SUNDAY.—Dined with him as usual. Wife only present. He again referred to the great shortage of suitable men for high office. I said, "The men are there, but you do not know them." To this he agreed.

The conversation turned on the labour question.

R. : Willoughby de Broke<sup>1</sup> made quite a good speech the other day. Did you see it?

L. G. : What did he say?

R. : He said in effect that everyone is displaying too much selfishness. No one is willing to give up anything. That is true. Of course most people have little to sacrifice. As to the employers, they talk a lot but when it comes to the point will give up nothing.

L. G. : Are you right there? I was much impressed by what Sir Allan Smith<sup>2</sup> said at the Conference. He said that the employers are prepared to go much further than the workers believe, but demand better and more work. Old McAlpine is a shrewd man. He told me to-day that the men are not working.

R. : That may be, but it is not my point. What I mean is that any benefits which the employers give their men are invariably charged to the consumer. The employer will give up nothing. He insists on maintaining or improving his profits, with the result that prices keep on rising, followed by new demands for improved wages, which in their turn are followed by still further increases in prices. We are continually moving in a vicious circle.

[This made him look thoughtful, but he made no reply.]

. . . TH.—Paris again. L. G. remarked, "Wilson (President) has changed greatly. Now he is quite devoted to us. He

<sup>1</sup> Lord Willoughby de Broke; d. 1923.

<sup>2</sup> Chairman, management board, Engineering and Allied Employers' National Federation.

sees what we have done and that our motives are sound. He is coming to live opposite to me in the rue Nitot."

Long talk with General Wilson. Very amusing. He calls the politicians "The Frocks"—after their frock coats. "The Frocks will do this, or the Frocks won't do that." He explained in detail the arguments for and against the voluntary and conscript systems for Germany. The arguments are now public property and not worth repeating here.

A characteristic story about Curzon. It is alleged that when he went to the Foreign Office, he sent for his secretary and, pointing to the inkstand on the table, remarked, "A Secretary of State must have an inkstand of crystal and silver and not of brass and glass."

Travelled to France with L. G. and party. On the way from Boulogne he spent most of the time in conference with Austen Chamberlain.<sup>1</sup> On arriving in Paris he had a dinner-party—Milner, Arthur Balfour and others—to discuss more business. General Wilson told me that some of the Chinese labourers objected to being under fire on the ground that in China there are two classes—the brave men and the poltroons. The objectors belonged to the latter and urged that it was not right that men of their class should be subjected to dangers reserved for brave men who would derive honour and glory from their sacrifice. True or untrue, the story raises immense possibilities.

7TH.—F. C. Tiarks, a Director of the Bank of England, and Commercial Adviser to the Army of Occupation, tells me that the food position in the occupied area is serious. He wants to see the P.M.. I suggested he should prepare a memorandum and send it to him. Tiarks confirms the report of Gibson, the Government agent, which has made so much impression. Later Tiarks told me he had dined with the P.M., to whom he showed a cable from a general as to the position. The P.M. said that as he did not know the general he could not use the message, but that if Tiarks could get a message from Plumer<sup>2</sup> to the same effect, he would guarantee to get the food. Tiarks said he should wire to

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Austen Chamberlain; Chan. of Exchequer, 1919-21.

<sup>2</sup> Later Field Marshal Viscount Plumer; G.O.C. Army of the Rhine, Dec. 1918-April 1919; d. 1932.

Plumer for the message, and was very excited about his interview with the P.M., whom he described as "magnificent."

8TH.—While I was seated in the Peace Conference ante-chamber, a cable arrived from Plumer setting forth the parlous condition of the Germans in the occupied territory. This was taken in to L. G., who read it to the Supreme War Council, upon whom apparently it made a great impression. The Council decided to victual the Germans, provided they hand over their ships and pay for the food in bills of exchange on other countries, goods or gold. The French strongly opposed this. L. G. said to me afterwards that the French are acting very foolishly, and will, if they are not careful, drive the Germans into Bolshevism. He told me that he had made a violent attack on Klotz, the French Minister of Finance, in which he said that if a Bolshevik state is formed in Germany, three statues will be erected—one to Lenin, one to Trotsky and the third to Klotz. Klotz made no reply. L. G. said very little to Clemenceau, who is looking tired and worn. The Americans are pleased with L. G.'s speech. Baruch said that in Wilson's absence they have no efficient advocate at the Peace Conference, and do not make half enough fight upon important questions. All the commercial people, British and American, favour abolishing the blockade and urge an early settlement with Germany so that the world may again get to work. The truth is that five valuable months have been spent in dealing with the less important subjects, including the machinery for governing the world after the war. Wilson's obsession for the League of Nations; our desire to avoid awkward questions, and the French desire for delay are responsible. Meanwhile Mr. Lenin has jumped up like a Jack-in-the-Box and is spreading disease germs all over the world, just as influenza is spread.

*Later.*—L. G. and suite dined with me at the Ritz. He said he had had a hard day. Plumer's cable arrived at the critical moment.

L. G. : It was arranged last night that he should be asked to wire. Of course I knew that he would wire the truth, whatever it was. He is an honest, truthful man, and would not say anything he did not believe.

9TH (SUNDAY).—Long talk with General Wilson, who says that the question of German disarmament is not yet settled. The position is this: Foch has proposed a conscript army of 200,000 yearly men. On the other hand, L. G. has suggested a voluntary army of 140,000 twelve-year men. Foch's objection to the latter is that the 140,000 men will become virtually officers, so that with their assistance the Germans could raise and equip a great army, which they could not do if they were raising a fresh 200,000 men every year. L. G.'s point is that if Foch's plan were adopted, the Germans would have at the end of 12 years, 2,400,000 trained men. Wilson thinks that the defect of Foch's plan is that the Germans might secretly keep 50,000 of the men for 3, 4, or 5 years, or even 12 years, instead of one year. They would thus have 50,000 potential officers and in 12 years' time 1,800,000 trained men. At the moment L. G.'s plan has carried the day, but it is to be further considered to-morrow. Wilson said that he had written to L. G. urging him not to turn down Foch's plans too hastily, and not to run away with the notion that they were dictated by imperialistic ideas.

Wilson finished the conversation by saying, "Well, the war Frocks will have to decide, and you never know what rocks will do!"

13TH.—Walked home with L. G. after he had addressed a meeting of newspaper correspondents which I convened. He said, "Believe me, I am fighting hard for my country, and doing my best. It is a difficult task. The question of the indemnity is now causing trouble. The French demands are absurd. I will not agree to them. I object to any nation having a preference, and the claim will have to be reasonable."

R. : It is just like a bankruptcy.

L. G. : Yes, the same problems as we used to have to deal with. If A. knocks B. down with his motor car, the first step is to assess the damages suffered by B., the second to ascertain how much A. can pay. That is my attitude regarding reparations, but I object to the attitude of certain creditors, who try to swell their claims so as to get a bigger share of the available assets by way of dividend. That is an old device for claiming against a bankrupt estate. Montagu is dealing

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Wilson finished the conversation by saying, "Well, the rocks will have to decide, and you never know what will do!"

TH.—Walked home with L. G. after he had addressed a group of newspaper correspondents which I convened. He said: "Believe me, I am fighting hard for my country, and for my best. It is a difficult task. The question of the reparations is now causing trouble. The French demands are too high. I will not agree to them. I object to any nation having a right to demand reparations, and the claim will have to be reasonable."

It is just like a bankruptcy.

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(SUNDAY).—Long talk with General Wilson, who says question of German disarmament is not yet settled. Position is this: Foch has proposed a conscript army of 1,000,000 yearly men. On the other hand, L. G. has suggested a conscript army of 140,000 twelve-year men. Foch's objection to the latter is that the 140,000 men will become virtually useless so that with their assistance the Germans could raise up a great army, which they could not do if they were replaced by fresh 200,000 men every year. L. G.'s point is that if Foch's plan were adopted, the Germans would have at the end of 12 years, 2,400,000 trained men. Wilson thinks that the object of Foch's plan is that the Germans might secretly keep 100,000 of the men for 3, 4, or 5 years, or even 12 years, instead of one year. They would thus have 50,000 potential men and in 12 years' time 1,800,000 trained men. At the end of 12 years L. G.'s plan has carried the day, but it is to be further considered to-morrow. Wilson said that he had written to General Foch telling him not to turn down Foch's plans too hastily, not to run away with the notion that they were dictated by fantastic ideas.

Wilson finished the conversation by saying, "Well, the clocks will have to decide, and you never know what will do!"

—Walked home with L. G. after he had addressed a group of newspaper correspondents which I convened. He said to me, "Believe me, I am fighting hard for my country, and for the best. It is a difficult task. The question of the reparations is now causing trouble. The French demands are too high. They will not agree to them. I object to any nation having a claim on Germany, and the claim will have to be reasonable."

It is just like a bankruptcy.

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March 1919]

## THE PEACE CONFERENCE AND AFTER

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Wilson finished the conversation by saying, "Well, the poor Frocks will have to decide, and you never know what Frocks will do!"

13TH.—Walked home with L. G. after he had addressed a meeting of newspaper correspondents which I convened. He said, "Believe me, I am fighting hard for my country, and doing my best. It is a difficult task. The question of the indemnity is now causing trouble. The French demands are absurd. I will not agree to them. I object to any nation having a preference, and the claim will have to be reasonable."

R. : It is just like a bankruptcy.

L. G. : Yes, the same problems as we used to have to deal with. If A. knocks B. down with his motor car, the first step is to assess the damages suffered by B., the second to ascertain how much A. can pay. That is my attitude regarding reparations, but I object to the attitude of certain creditors, who want to swell their claims so as to get a bigger share of the available assets by way of dividend. That is an old device when claiming against a bankrupt estate. Montagu is dealing

with this question for me. He is conducting the negotiations with the French.

R. : Very suitable. Nothing like the right man in the right place.

L. G. : Another instance of efficiency. I told him to-day to tell the French that the negotiations were off. We could not agree to their proposals. The French were surprised and protested, but I told Montagu to be quite firm.

R. : I hope we shall soon get peace.

15TH.—On my way to the Quai d'Orsay with Lord Burnham<sup>1</sup> I met L. G. returning in his motor. He looked very tense. Later I called on him. He said President Wilson had not attended to-day's meeting of the Supreme War Council, as he desired further to consider proposed terms of Peace with the Germans. L. G. very angry. He said, "We shall never get a settlement if we continually re-open what has been decided. Yesterday at our informal Conference at the Crillon we did nothing. Wilson talked for an hour about the League of Nations and his ideals, but we did nothing practical. The position is serious. I am calling a meeting of my colleagues for this evening. What do you think of the West Leyton election?" (Coalition majority reduced from 5,000 to 2,000.)

R. : The Liverpool by-election points the same way.

[I might have added that the public are getting tired of Peace Conference delays, but I did not.]

L. G. : The election is most timely and valuable. I am having a great row with the Tories. They want a land bill that will carefully protect the landowner, the lawyer and the surveyor. I have declined to be a party to anything of the sort. I have written a letter—a very strong letter—setting out my views. I have said, "I am willing to give you a bill providing fair compensation, and I decline to be a party to a scheme that will cause delays and place the landowners in a position to which they are not entitled." Unless the Tories agree to what I want, I shall fight the matter out to the end. Bonar is here. I sent for him. It was necessary that I should see him and put the matter to him plainly. Land must be got quickly for

<sup>1</sup> Chief proprietor *Daily Telegraph*, 1903-27; President International Labour Conference, Geneva, 1921-22 and 1926; d. 1933.

housing and other state purposes. Delays will be dangerous.

*Earlier.*—Burnham tells me that Mr. Asquith dashed up to him in the Hotel (The Ritz) and exclaimed, "You cannot tell what I am feeling to-day. The West Leyton election is the turn of the tide. Things at last are looking better for us." [I told this to L. G., who remarked, "The tide has turned after his ship has gone on the rocks!" R.: "Or rather has been posted a total loss at Lloyds!" L. G. (laughing): "Yes, that's more like it. My ship may be in danger, but it is still floating pretty securely."]

*Later.*—L. G. dined at the Majestic and attended the dance afterwards. He took great interest in the proceedings, but I thought looked weary, as well he may with all the problems he has to face—the Peace Conference, the mining trouble, and the Tory opposition.

*Later.*—Tuohy of the *New York World* tells me Wilson is determined to press for the inclusion of the League of Nations Covenant in the preliminary terms of Peace, as he considers that if he fails that will be tantamount to a defeat by his opponents in America. He fears that when Peace is signed and the pressure removed, his scheme may easily be relegated to a back place.

16TH (SUNDAY).—Drove with L. G. and party to Soissons and the Chemin des Dames. We lunched *en route* in a wood. After lunch I had quite a long walk with him, the motors catching us up later. He again referred to his quarrel with the Tories and to the West Leyton and Liverpool elections. He said, "I have made it quite clear that I don't intend to play their game. The country is in no mood for delays. I told Bonar that the evidence in the colliery commission proves what I have been saying for years, but no one paid any attention because they thought I was exaggerating. Now the facts are proved by evidence in a legal tribunal. The owners are making a very poor show. They have nothing to say in answer to the charges as to housing conditions, etc.. I am not going to be made the landowners' cat's-paw, and unless the Tories accept my bill, I shall take steps to make them accept it."

*Later.*—Dined with L. G.. Arthur Balfour, Kerr and Ian Malcolm were there. Balfour remarked as we sat down,

"We four, L. G., Philip Kerr, George Riddell and myself, have not met since Danny. What a beautiful place that is and what times we had there ! They ought to have been recorded. They were extraordinary scenes. Do you remember the afternoon when we all prepared draft replies to President Wilson's letter ? I think there were five drafts. Philip Kerr sat in one room preparing one, Hankey was trying his hand in another room at another, Reading, in a third room, was composing another, Milner, in a fourth room, another, and I, in a fifth room, another, which I think ultimately was accepted, subject to slight modifications. It was a historic scene and a historic document."

Much talk about Clemenceau and Wilson. L. G. said, "Each lacks and fails to understand the other's best qualities. When Wilson talks idealism, Clemenceau wonders what he means, and, metaphorically speaking, touches his forehead, as much as to say, 'A good man, but not quite all there !' "

Conversation turned on Judge Rentoul.<sup>1</sup> A. J. B. said that he had heard he was an excellent after-dinner speaker, but always began and ended in the same way.

R. : I have heard him many times. It is true that he often starts with the story of the young man who began his speech at a public dinner by saying, "When I came into this room only two people knew what I was going to say—God Almighty and myself. Now there is only one who knows, and that is God Almighty ! " This pleased L. G. and A. J. B..

A. J. B. : A good story, and I don't want to spoil it, but it is really taken from Hegel, who, as you know, was a very involved thinker.

L. G. : Haldane's master !

A. J. B. : With a touch of Scottish clarity thrown in ! Well, a student took Hegel one of the latter's nebulous statements for explanation. Hegel remarked, "When I wrote that only two people knew what I meant—God Almighty and myself, and now only God Almighty knows ! "

After dinner we went to Arthur Balfour's flat to listen to music, and remained there until a late hour.

17TH.—It is no joke to be a President. Wilson is guarded

<sup>1</sup> d. August 1919.

by detectives morning, noon and night. To-day I saw one of them standing outside the lavatory watching over his chief.

To-day a dramatic interview took place between L. G. and Foch. Foch had two officers with him, General Weygand and another who acted as interpreter. The talk began in the ante-chamber of the Peace Conference Room and proceeded as the party walked downstairs—Foch most eloquent and emphatic as to the importance of sending the Rumanian Army to Poland. Then, when the party reached the door at the bottom of the stairs, Foch took L. G. by the arm and led him into the vestibule so as to continue the conversation. It was a great sight to see old Foch with his eager face and head bent forward in his anxiety to emphasise his points. L. G. kept repeating, "The great necessity is to give them food. That will keep them from Bolshevism." To which old Foch always added, "Yes, and an army !"

## Chapter V

*The Conference slows down—Impatience at home—Clemenceau failing—L. G. complains of misrepresentation—Drawing the new frontiers.*

MARCH 19TH, 1919.—In the morning golfed with L. G. and Kerr at St. Cloud. Labour situation at home very serious. Wilson, Clemenceau and Orlando<sup>1</sup> want L. G. to stay here and finish up the Peace Conference, whereas the Cabinet at home want him to return there for a few days to endeavour to settle the labour question. I asked him what he was going to do. He replied, "There is only one Person who knows and He won't say. I shall stay if possible as I think it essential to get this business finished. The Peace Conference will re-act on Labour."

We talked about the Peace negotiations.

R. : Clemenceau looks much shaken. He seems to be growing older every day.

L. G. : Yes, unfortunately. That is one of the difficulties of the situation. The old boy has lost his power of coming to decisions. He is not the Clemenceau of six months ago. He is overcome by the torrent of Wilson's eloquence. It seems to paralyse him.

21ST.—Great dissatisfaction at slow progress of Peace Conference negotiations. Drove home with L. G. from the Quai d'Orsay. He said that things were not going well, and again referred to Clemenceau's state of health. L. G. continued :

"I am going to Fontainebleau for the week-end and mean to put in the hardest forty-eight hours' thinking I have ever done. The Conference is not going well, and I must try to pull things together. The indemnity question is very difficult. It is impossible to get the French to come to an agreement, and the financial experts differ widely in their views as to the Germans' capacity to pay."

<sup>1</sup> The Italian Prime Minister and one of the "Big Four" of the Conference.

R. : It is obvious that any estimate must be very sketchy and extremely doubtful. The matter will have to be decided by three or four sensible men acting on broad lines. The settlement of an indemnity is not like the plan of a building. You don't want accurate measurements. The figure must be more or less approximate. The chief thing is an early decision.

L. G. : Yes, but the trouble is that we cannot get the French to come to an agreement. However, I hope to make some progress next week.

R. : It looks as if it is going to be a race between peace and anarchy. Until peace is signed the world will not settle down to work. Everything is held up. Commercial men will not place orders, and manufacturers will not start new enterprises. [Note. I have been pressing for more publicity as to the proceedings of the Conference and the Committees. The world does not appreciate what is being done nor the difficulties of the situation. This increases the impatience of the public.]

L. G. : I dined with Briand<sup>1</sup> the other night. He says that Clemenceau is losing ground rapidly and that the opposition in the Chamber is growing. Of course that was to be expected. When I decided in December to have an election, I saw there would be considerable dissatisfaction in the country for some time to come, and that it was desirable to have a fresh Parliament. I cannot say that the House of Commons is quite what I should have desired. At the same time, it is a new Parliament, elected to deal with present-day issues, whereas the French Parliament is out of date. As soon as the pressure of the war was over Clemenceau could not be sure of adequate Parliamentary support. I think he should have followed our example and had an election, but he let the opportunity slip. I think Briand will succeed him. Perhaps he is better suited to deal with present-day problems than Clemenceau, particularly in view of the latter's increasing feebleness, due no doubt to his having been shot. A man of seventy-seven, however vigorous, cannot be shot in the lungs with impunity. Of course Clemenceau was much better for war than Briand. There was no comparison. The old man had the true war spirit. He stands

<sup>1</sup>French Premier and Foreign Minister, 1915-17; 1921-22; d. 1932.



for France as a unit. But the questions which affect the different classes of society don't interest him. When you are dealing with peace problems you have to consider these matters.

R. : Lord Warwick's son, Guy Brooke,<sup>1</sup> told me yesterday that he had entertained Briand and Arthur Balfour to lunch, and that the former had emphasised the fact that France's strength is her agricultural population. The peasants are against violent changes. They live hard lives, but are comparatively well-off and would resent anything in the nature of Bolshevism. Therefore France always has a million soldiers upon whom she can depend to keep order—men drawn from the agricultural districts. Briand said that in England the position is different.

L. G. : Yes, that is very true. Have you heard the latest Clemenceau story? Some members of the Chamber of Deputies waited on him to demand the dismissal of Klotz. He said it was impossible, and explained the reasons, adding, "May I remind you that Rome was not saved by eagles?"

24TH.—L. G. back from Fontainebleau. I met Henry Wilson, who painted a gloomy picture of the position in the East. He said, "We are drifting to disaster. I have told the P.M. that if the Conference don't take charge of affairs, affairs will take charge of them! It is all due to President Wilson. My cousin (as the C.I.G.S. always calls him) is responsible and the world ought to know it. I think the P.M. has done good work. Anyhow we have all worked hard while at Fontainebleau, i.e. the P.M., Cunliffe,<sup>2</sup> Keynes,<sup>3</sup> Kerr and myself. They are going to suspend the Conference of Ten, and L. G., Clemenceau, Wilson and Orlando are going to meet every day and try to settle the terms. But I have told the P.M. that he ought to have Hanky-Panky (Sir Maurice Hankey) with him. The trouble is that the four meet together and think they have decided things, but there is no one to record what they have done. The consequence is that misunderstandings often arise

<sup>1</sup> Lord Brooke, later the Earl of Warwick; d. 1928.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Cunliffe, Governor of the Bank of England; d. 1919.

<sup>3</sup> Professor J. M. Keynes, the economist.

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## THE PEACE CONFERENCE AND AFTER

and there is no definite account of their proceedings and nothing happens."

Later saw Kerr and told him the feelings of dissatisfaction were growing and that a general attack by all sections of the Press might be expected. Strongly urged more publicity. He endeavoured to defend the Conference against the allegations of delay. He said that L. G. had been back in Paris only for a fortnight and that during that time the Council had settled the naval and military terms and had made arrangements to send food to Germany. He said further that the party at Fontainebleau had worked hard—very hard. After some pressure he told me that L. G. had drawn up draft terms of peace and would now endeavour to get them agreed by Wilson, Clemenceau and Orlando. He said that the meetings of the Council of Ten were to be suspended and that the four were to meet *de die in diem* until they had come to an agreement. I strongly urged that the P.M. should meet the journalists.

Later, having seen the *communiqué*, in which it was stated that the Council of Ten had been engaged in discussing the cutting of submarine cables in wartime, I thought it advisable to let the public know that drastic steps were being taken to conclude terms of peace. I therefore communicated the above information to the Press. The French and American Press did not get the news, and the French were very much annoyed in consequence, particularly as L. G. had made a strong complaint in the Council that secret information was being handed out by French officials to the French newspapers.

26TH.—In accordance with my suggestion, L. G. met the journalists to-day and made a long statement dealing with various questions, but only one remark need be recorded here. Someone said to him, "Will the terms be submitted to the Plenary Conference?" His reply was, "I devoutly hope not!"

28TH.—He is very angry with the Press for criticising the alleged delay of the Conference and his views on Polish boundaries. I said, "The whole world is asking for peace. They want to get to work. All eyes are turned to Paris. The people do not understand the delays. They do not appreciate the

difficulties because they have not been explained. They are nervous and critical. They think civilisation may be shattered."

L. G. : You really must try to get the papers to be more reasonable. They must not lose their heads. They must remember that we are settling the peace of the world. It is a gigantic task. We must make, if we can, an enduring peace. That is why I feel so strongly regarding the proposal to hand over two million Germans to the Poles, who are an inferior people so far as concerns the experience and capacity for government. We do not want to create another Alsace-Lorraine. The French are now in agreement and so are our people. My views have been grossly misrepresented. That is what I object to.

R. : If more information were supplied—not necessarily for publication—these misunderstandings would not be so likely to arise. But it must be remembered that violent antagonisms are necessarily raised by the subjects of discussion and that the various protagonists are all anxious to secure the assistance of the Press and will use every means in their power to do so.

I asked him if the Peace Treaty had been drafted. He replied, "No. Only my proposals. What I prepared last Sunday."

R. : Can this be said publicly? It might impede the negotiations. The French and Americans might say that the British are endeavouring to force a British peace upon the world.

L. G. : Yes, I think you are right.

We talked of the indemnity.

He read me Mr. Claude Lowther's<sup>1</sup> memorandum suggesting seizure of German War Loan, which would place the Allies in possession of eight million pounds. I said, "That is a ridiculous scheme. It begs the whole question."

L. G. : Yes. A pretentious, foolish proposal. That shows how little people appreciate the difficulties with which we are faced. We are making progress. We are gradually drawing nearer. These attacks in the Press are most harmful.

I said, "The Press, like you, feel that they are doing their duty. They deal with the facts as they know them. The Conference is too secretive. They have themselves to blame."

<sup>1</sup> M.P. Lonsdale Div. of Lancashire, 1918-22 ; d. 1929.

29TH.—Dined at the Majestic and afterwards went to look at the dancing. L. G., A. J. B., and many others there. Both Mr. Balfour and Mr. Balfour very interested in the performance. At about 5 o'clock, the former slipped out to talk to the Solicitor-General, and at 11.45 was giving him instructions to ring up the Attorney-General in London and ask him to start for Paris by the 7.50 train next morning.

Walked home with L. G.. Still very angry about Press criticism, and that his motives and actions should be misunderstood. Used strong language about some of the journalists. He said he rather thought of getting Sutherland<sup>1</sup> to come over to represent his views to the journalists. I said, "That is a matter for you. Propaganda is not one of the functions for which I have been appointed by the newspapers. Giving information will satisfy the Press but more information. Furthermore, you are dealing with questions which raise the most important international antagonisms, and every nation implicated is endeavouring to make use of the Press as a propaganda outlet. The Poles, the Greeks, the Czecho-Slovaks, the Jugoslavs, the French, the Americans, are all busy."

[I might have added that he himself is not inactive in this respect.]

30TH (SUNDAY).—Motored with L. G. to St. Germain and Versailles, lunching in a wood *en route*. He, in a jolly mood, told me two good things said by Clemenceau in reply to Wilson at one of the secret conferences.

WILSON : Force is a failure. Your Napoleon even admitted defeat on his death-bed.

CLEMENCEAU : It was rather late, was it not ? And your country shows the fallacy of the statement. The U.S.A. was created by force and consolidated by force. You must admit that !

Then again Wilson, when speaking of the French claim to the Saar coalfield, remarked, " You (the French) base your claim on what took place a hundred and four years ago. We cannot readjust Europe on the basis of conditions that existed at such a remote period."

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir William Sutherland ; Parliamentary Secretary to Mr. Lloyd George, 1918-20.

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CLEMENCEAU : Your country is a great country, but I can quite understand that a hundred and four years is a long period in its history. Europe is different !

Very long talk with L. G. about the Press. I reiterated that more news should be given out and that secrecy would result in unfavourable criticism. L. G. at last agreed that it would be desirable to publish more, but said there were great difficulties, and that premature publication of decisions had led to serious trouble in Germany and Eastern Europe. He added, " I am sure that if the public and Parliament knew the facts they would support the policy of the Conference. I know Parliament, and I know that if I made a speech explaining the position, they would support the Conference. I believe the public would do the same. There must be reason in a matter of this sort." I said that while I saw the difficulties, I thought that the Conference would have done well to give more information by agreement instead of allowing it to percolate out through unauthorised and devious channels. Ultimately, after more discussion, it was agreed that L. G. or Kerr should make a point of seeing me every day for the purpose of giving information. L. G. said, " The truth is that we have got our way. We have got most of the things we set out to get. If you had told the British people twelve months ago that they would have secured what they have, they would have laughed you to scorn. The German Navy has been handed over ; the German mercantile shipping has been handed over, and the German colonies have been given up. One of our chief trade competitors has been most seriously crippled and our Allies are about to become her biggest creditors. That is no small achievement. In addition, we have destroyed the menace to our Indian possessions. Of course the French may say in effect, ' Now that you have got all you want, you are anxious to secure a speedy Peace on terms which will satisfy the Germans and prevent them from declining to ratify the points which Great Britain has secured already.' That is not true. Our aim is to secure a Peace that will last, but from the French point of view there is a good deal to be said. That is one of our chief difficulties."

*Later.* Dined with L. G.. Very pleasant party. He made

some facetious observations concerning Press criticism. He said, "I have a proposal to make. I suggest that the Peace Conference deliberations be handed over to the newspaper representatives. Then we should get progress and satisfactory decisions." I said, "For one thing you would not get any newspaper criticism and there would be a general agreement in the Press that matters were proceeding satisfactorily."

L. G. : But such an optimistic tone might injure the circulations. What would happen if there were no criticism? Would not the sales drop?

R. : Well, the Press could still criticise the muddle that their predecessors had left!

31ST.—The Council of Four are meeting at Wilson's house or the Ministry of War. This afternoon I went to the Ministry for the first time, sitting for nearly two hours in the ante-room while the discussions were going on, my fellow victims being Hankey and Kerr. After a time Foch, Wilson and General Bliss<sup>1</sup> came out of the room. For some minutes Foch and Wilson stood cracking jokes together in high good humour. Later, L. G. came out and asked Hankey to draft a resolution regarding the Hungarian question. Hankey remarked, "It is difficult to draft a resolution when one has not heard the discussion and when one does not know what they are likely to agree to." However, he sat down and wrote the resolution in pencil on his knee. L. G. full of fun. I drove home with him. He said that he had had a row with the Belgian Minister and that the Belgians were putting forward preposterous claims. He remarked, "I had to tell him quite plainly that the Belgians had lost comparatively few men in the war, and that, when all was said, Belgium had not made greater sacrifices than Great Britain. The truth is that we are always called upon to foot the bill. When anything has to be done it is 'Old England' that has to do it. If the Rumanians have to be supplied with food and credits have to be given, in the final result England has to stand the racket. It is time that we again told the world what we have done. These things tend to be forgotten. Our policy is quite clear but imperfectly under-

<sup>1</sup>We mean that the French shall have the coal in the Saar

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Chief of Staff.

Valley and that the Poles shall have access to the sea through Danzig ; but we don't want to create a condition of affairs that will be likely to lead to another war. We don't want to place millions of Germans under the domination of the French and the Poles. That would not be for their benefit, and what is the use of setting up a lot of Alsace-Lorraines ? Of course the trouble is to find a suitable alternative. Clemenceau says in effect, ' If you don't give me what I want, I can't meet my people. I shall have to resign.' Wilson's view is the same as ours. I think you ought to explain the American and British view to the Press."



## Chapter VI

*The Colonial Ministers complain of Secrecy—Approaching the Peace Terms—L. G. on the question of publication—"To the uttermost farthing"—The Sankey Report.*

APRIL 1ST, 1919.—Saw Kerr and told him the Colonial Ministers are very bitter. They feel they are not being consulted, and doubtless remember the fuss made of them during the war. Strongly urged that L. G. should invite them to lunch or dinner and explain the position and obtain their support. Later Kerr told me he had seen the P.M. and this would be done. I told Kerr there is a strong feeling that the heads are not consulted enough before important decisions are arrived at. Consequently there is the danger that L. G. will not get the support he should have. It is important that he should carry with him the whole of the Delegation. The feeling is growing that the policy is dictated too much by one person without consultation.

...TH.—The Emir Feisal<sup>1</sup> compares the British and French Governments to a string of camels in the desert. He says the camels travel in a long train, the head-rope of each being tied to the tail of the one in front. When you have overtaken fifty or sixty camels moving along in this fashion and you come to the head of the train, you find that the leader is a clever little donkey.

3RD.—L. G. : The chief difference between ordinary and extraordinary men is that when the extraordinary man is faced by a novel and difficult situation, he extricates himself by adopting a plan which is at once daring and unexpected. That is the mark of genius in a man of action.

5TH.—This has been a week of criticism and alarms. The Council of Four has been conducting its deliberations with much secrecy, and the public and the Press have become anxious and critical, the Northcliffe Press and the French papers in particular.

<sup>1</sup> Later became King Feisal of Iraq ; d. 1933.

I strongly advised L. G. to see some of the French journalists and give them interviews, which he has done with good results. This evening I saw L. G. in order to procure information for the usual daily statement to the Press. Found him reclining on the sofa.

L. G. : Well, we have made great progress. We have settled practically all outstanding questions with the exception of that relating to breaches of the Laws of War. We shall begin next week to draft the Peace Treaty. I will make a statement to the Press for publication on Monday evening. I shall have something interesting to say.

R. : Will the peace terms be published before they are discussed with the Germans ?

L. G. : No, certainly not ! They will be handed to the Germans when they come to Versailles. If the terms were published beforehand, the position of the German Government would be made impossible. The terms might lead to revolution. We shall be very strict about any infraction of this arrangement, and shall punish any paper that publishes the terms before we make them public.

R. : You will have to make that clear beforehand. Are you going to make a statement in the House of Commons before you meet the Germans ?

L. G. : I am not sure that I am. In any case, I shall not state the terms. What do you think of the disgraceful attacks upon me in *The Times* and *Daily Mail* ? They call me a pro-German. That is a libel. I have a good mind to bring an action. I shall certainly say in public what I think about Northcliffe.

R. : I should not bring any action. You are accustomed to say bitter things yourself.

L. G. : I should like to ask him (N.) this question, "By whom would you replace me ? Bonar Law and Balfour both agree with me, so they would be equally objectionable."

R. : He is quite entitled to criticise the Conference for delay or silence or for the policy they are adopting regarding any subject, but any person who breaks up the Conference will assume a serious responsibility.

L. G. : That is quite true. [But I doubt whether he meant

to assent to the proposition that criticism is justified. High priests engaged in sacred ordinances never like to be criticised.]

...TH.—Met Lord Cunliffe. Asked him how he was bearing up. He replied that he was sick to death of the job. "You are ordered here and ordered there," said he. "Do this and do that. But no one ever says, 'Good dog!'"

Subsequently saw Hankey and suggested that the P.M. should write appropriate letters of thanks to all those people who have been helping at the Conference. Hankey thought this an admirable suggestion. As it is, no one gets a word of acknowledgement. L. G. very pleasant but very exacting.

9TH.—Met Walter Long<sup>1</sup> in the street. He complained that Northcliffe is actuated by personal motives and does not base his criticism upon the merits of the case. I said, "That may be, but politicians have often said that about their critics."

Drove to Fontainebleau, where I spent the morning with Northcliffe. We golfed and lunched together. He complained of his health. He said his throat was still bad and that the lump in it was no smaller. He proposes, if there is no improvement, to go to Colorado, where the atmosphere is just what is needed. He said some remarkable things about President Wilson—somewhat, with omissions, as follows :

"Unless L. G. and Clemenceau are careful, Wilson will put them in the cart. Wilson is a vain man—his vanity is colossal. I have seen many evidences of it. He is a bluffer, and I agree with ( ) who says he is a gambler. He is a political adventurer and will stick at nothing. His power is waning. He is losing his position in America steadily. He is a sentimentalist and will put all the blame for the delay and any defects in the Peace Treaty on L. G. and Clemenceau."

He said but little concerning L. G.. He told me he was not afraid of American commercial competition and felt sure we should hold our own. He said that the peculiarity of America was her knack of casting up great men like Edison, Ford, Eastman and others. Why she did, he could not understand. N. was very friendly and kind. He complimented me again on my work for the Press and expressed his intention of writing

<sup>1</sup> Later Viscount Long of Wraxall; d. 1924.

to suggest a testimonial. We parted with mutual assurances of good-will.

On my return I again discussed with L. G. the question of publishing the peace terms.

L. G. : Publication would be an act of treachery. We shall prosecute. No paper would dare to publish.

R. : I do not agree. Any paper that gets the terms—and they will all try to get them—will risk a prosecution. They will risk a big fine and many will risk imprisonment. And remember you are dealing with papers of all nations—not only the British Press. How will you control the Americans, the Italians, the Belgians, the Serbians and so on ?

L. G. : That may be difficult, but it is essential. Neither Clemenceau nor I propose to state the terms in Parliament until the time arrives for ratification.

R. : I am confident you are wrong about publicity. The Germans published the Armistice terms with important omissions, which prejudiced the Allies in neutral countries, and they will do the same with the peace terms. There will be strong opposition. But if you want to maintain secrecy you must promptly advise the Press officially of your intentions and desires.

L. G. : I will at once bring the question formally before the Council and get a memorandum issued.

L. G. spoke of indemnities and I thought his tone very changed. To-day he said the Germans would have to pay to the uttermost farthing. He pushed aside economic difficulties and said that if the Germans decline to fulfil their obligations, we can compel them by an economic blockade. This changed attitude may or may not be due to the strong and growing feeling at home on the subject of indemnities. It is interesting to endeavour to analyse L. G.'s mind and actions during the Conference. He has performed a great service by establishing better relations with Wilson, and he has fought our battle with great vigour, courage, skill and dexterity. But it is useless to deny that he has become more autocratic ; more intolerant of criticism, and more insistent upon secrecy. No four kings or emperors could have conducted the Conference on more autocratic lines. Information has leaked out, and every day I

have received a dole from the P.M. or Kerr on his behalf, which I have passed on to the Press, but there has been no systematic issue of information, and the doings of the Council of Four have been shrouded in mystery. This has had a bad effect upon the public. Delays were inevitable, but the people find them hard to bear in the absence of information as to the reasons. L. G. is just as ready as ever to gather information and to consult, and just as charming and kind, but his attitude is rather that of a benevolent autocrat. "I will decide what is for your good and will see you get it."

11TH.—To dinner with L. G.. Present, Bonar Law, his son, Mrs. Astor,<sup>1</sup> Kerr, Miss Stevenson.

Much talk of result of Hull election declared to-day. The Unionist candidate, Eustace Percy, defeated, and a huge turnover of votes. B. L. described this as serious. L. G. said it showed that the people did not like this sort of candidate. I said it showed that the people were tired of delays in regard to housing, etc.. Both L. G. and B. L. admitted that the Government had lost ground. The former described this as inevitable, and said it showed the wisdom of holding the election in December. Clemenceau had not had an election, and found himself without support in the Chamber. A period of unrest and dissatisfaction was bound to arise after the war, "but when peace has been made, when people see that we are doing things, the public mind will tend to settle down and take a more reasonable attitude."

B. L. : I am pessimistic, as I always am (and he looked it more than ever !). We have some awkward hurdles to cross.

L. G. : What are they ?

B. L. : The miners are raising troublesome points on the Sankey<sup>2</sup> report. The owners will probably decline to agree to what is asked. That may force us into nationalisation before we are ready.

L. G. : Well, if it does, that will not be very serious. It has to come. The State will have to shoulder the burden sooner or later. What is the second hurdle ?

<sup>1</sup> Now Viscountess Astor, M.P.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Justice (now Viscount) Sankey was chairman of the Coal Industry Commission, 1919.

B. L. : The Budget. That raises all sorts of problems, including the question of fiscal policy.

L. G. : Well that can wait for the moment. I don't believe in meeting troubles half way. I have a sort of idea that we shall be able to scrape through with the revival of trade. . . . There is a good deal in what Riddell said the other day about housing. When it was a question of carrying on the war, we found no difficulty in taking land and building huge factories. Now we proceed with the utmost deliberation when it is a question of housing the people. I really think we should have dealt with housing as we did with factory construction—just have gone ahead. The people are bent on social reform—I am sure of that.

B. L. did not agree or disagree, but looked gloomier than ever. They talked of Winston.

L. G. : In certain moods he is dangerous. He has Bolshevism on the brain. Now he wants to make a treaty with the Germans to fight the Bolsheviks. He wants to employ German troops, and he is mad for operations in Russia.

B. L. : That is dangerous.

The discussion turned on the telegram sent to L. G. yesterday by two hundred M.P.s regarding fulfilment of election pledges as to indemnities.

L. G. : I think my reply took the right line. I said I was prepared, if need be, for a general election. That made them think.

B. L. : Yes, the reply was on the right lines.

L. G. : Kennedy Jones<sup>1</sup> acted badly. The message he sent to me was not really in accordance with his instructions.

B. L. : But the message was signed by four excellent men in addition to Kennedy Jones.

He then went over the names, and without arguing the point clearly showed that he attached grave importance to the message. He went on to urge L. G. to return to England for a few days.

L. G. (to me) : If there were an election who do you think would be elected ? Labour, by a substantial majority ?

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Hornsey 1916-21; d. 1921. The message referred to demanded that Germany should be made to pay to the utmost limit.

R. : I think the Labour Party would largely increase, but I doubt whether they would have a majority.

L. G. : I think you are right. How about the Liberals ? This is a great night for Asquith. He is having a dinner, and he has the Hull election as *hors d'œuvre*.

R. : I hardly think Mr. A. will ever be able to form another Government.

L. G. : They are trying to work up enthusiasm for Donald Maclean.<sup>1</sup>

B. L. : Well, he won't fill the bill.

L. G. : Remember they said that of Campbell-Bannerman !

R. : Yes, but he stood for something in the mind of the public.

L. G. : Yes, I agree. He was a big figure, and got bigger as he advanced.

A curious scene took place in the drawing-room. Mrs. Astor engaged in a good deal of badinage which made the party very noisy, everyone laughing and talking loudly, except Bonar Law, who displayed great skill in getting in under the barrage by speaking in a low modulated voice. This is one of his chief arts. In argument he always pitches his voice below that of his opponent and thus secures a hearing. Mrs. Astor vigorously reproached B. L. for having made Astor senior a peer, thus ruining the chances of her husband as a House of Commons man. "You were a mean creature !" she said. Then, laughing loudly, she darted at B. L., who was seated in a chair, and gave him a good shaking, to which he gently submitted.

Much talk of President Wilson. L. G. said he thought him more sincere than he had done at first. He talks a lot of sentimental platitudes, but believes them. He is not a hypocrite nor a humbug. He is sincere. The difference between his point of view and that of old Clemenceau is marked. The old boy believes in none of Wilson's gods and does not understand them. L. G. added, "I am sorry Clemenceau is failing. It is very marked. Now he so often asks for twenty-four hours in which to make up his mind. Before, he made it up in twenty-four seconds. A truly wonderful person."

<sup>1</sup>The Rt. Hon. Sir Donald Maclean; Chairman, Liberal Parliamentary Party, 1919-22; d. 1932.

12TH.—To-day I received from Swettenham<sup>1</sup> of the Press Bureau a copy of a message sent by Tuohy, of the *New York World*, containing a copy of the draft terms of the indemnity. I at once saw L. G. and A. J. Balfour with it, and pointed out the early realisation of my forecast. They were much perturbed and surprised.

17TH.—L. G. in great spirits after his speech in the H. of C. I said, "You are a great little man—always full of courage." "Well," he replied, "It never does to let your heart slip down." I said, "Despite appearances," tapping him on the bottom of his waistcoat (he is getting a little bow-window), "no one can say that your heart has slipped down."

L. G. : Old Clemenceau is a wonderful old dog. He is having trouble with Poincaré. He came and whispered in my ear this evening, "I wish you would lend me your George V ! " I must tell the King that. It will please him.

L. G. remarked later, "England is much saner than this place. It is far too excited. The Old Country is taking things far more steadily."

I said, "You did not tell the House of Commons much. Most of your speech was occupied with a disquisition on Russia and an attack on Northcliffe ! "

<sup>1</sup> Sir Frank Swettenham.



## Chapter VII

*Orlando in tears—How the Germans wanted to receive the Peace Terms—President Wilson creates a crisis on the Italian situation—His growing unpopularity.*

SUNDAY, APRIL 20TH, 1919.—Telephone message asking me to go with L. G. and party to Noyon, starting at 11 o'clock. We waited until after 12, L. G. being kept at a meeting at President Wilson's. As I looked over the road, I saw Orlando standing at one of the windows, apparently weeping. When L. G. returned I said, "Evidently you people have been putting it over poor Orlando. Have you decided against the Italian claims (the subject of discussion)? Orlando looked as if he were weeping."

L. G. : He was ! He was overcome by a speech I made. It was a touching scene. He began to gulp and then got up and walked to the window and regularly broke down. Wilson was very touched. He went and shook him by the hand.

R. : What did you say ?

L. G. : Well, as you know, Wilson is strongly opposed to the Italian territorial claims, not only to Fiume but also to the territories comprised in the Treaty of London. I said, "We stand by the Treaty. I must uphold the honour of my country. I think the Italians are making a mistake in taking over territory comprising so many Germans, and in particular the Tyrol. But, at the same time, what we have signed we stand by."

[Hankey told me subsequently that L. G. made quite a good little speech, but that it did not affect him (Hankey) nor Sonnino.<sup>1</sup> Hankey said, "I must be a hard-hearted person, but it left me cold. I suppose Orlando was touched, but it may have been a bit of acting as well. Anyway it was very effective. He began like a child when it is going to cry. Afterwards he came to me and went through it all again, saying how affected he was at L. G.'s support of Italy and so on. If you had wept in that way

<sup>1</sup> Baron Sonnino, another of the Italian delegates.

—which is hardly conceivable, if you don't mind my saying so !—do you think you could have referred to it afterwards ? ”]

L. G. : I have a very important bit of news that we must talk over, but we won't discuss it now. We will deal with it later.

He and I drove in one car, the others following in three more cars. We lunched in a wood, L. G. dilating as usual on the pleasure of taking meals in the open air. The other members of the party were Auckland Geddes, Guest, Kerr, Miss Stevenson and Mrs. Flower, two of the secretariat. I don't think either Geddes or Guest enjoyed the outing. Guest said dejectedly, “ This is a sad way of taking one's pleasure—rushing through the country at sixty miles an hour and lunching in a wood ! ”

Marshal Pétain<sup>1</sup> sent an officer to meet us. He took us over the battlefields and gave vivid descriptions. L. G. repeated General Mangin's aphorism about the great battle which turned the tide in the early spring of 1918—“ Foch conceived it. Gouraud made it possible. I did it.” This pleased our guide immensely. He repeated it several times in French and English saying, “ Bon . . . bon . . . That is true. Foch conceived it, Gouraud made it possible, and Mangin did it. Bon, bon ! Very good ! ” We reached home at 7.30.

Meanwhile L. G. had disclosed his news, viz. a telegram from the Germans stating that they proposed to send messengers to receive the peace terms and take them to Weimar. The Council of Four had replied, stating they would treat only with plenipotentiaries. The question was whether this should be made public. Eventually it was decided to send it out. We decided this at 7.55 p.m.. I motored to the Astoria, five minutes from L. G.'s flat in the rue Nitot. I was fortunate enough to get the Press Bureau in three minutes, and by five minutes past eight the message was in London and being distributed to the newspapers.

L. G. said the result of the message to the Germans might be to bring about the fall of the German Government, and that we were at a critical period of the negotiations. He thought the Germans' reply would show their disposition. If they agreed

<sup>1</sup> General-in-Chief of the French armies.

to send representatives, that would show they were anxious for peace. If they declined to do so, it would show they were indifferent.

Much talk about French claims. I said, "The more one sees of the French, the more one admires some of their characteristics—their courage, their resource and their resilience. It would be one of the most terrible calamities in history if the French civilisation were wiped out. They are entitled to every possible protection. Wilson is too dictatorial. America having absorbed the greater part of the world's wealth and having lost only comparatively few men, wants to dictate to France what sort of peace she should accept—France, which has been the battle ground. What sort of peace would the Americans have imposed if a German army had been encamped for four years within fifty miles of New York?"

L. G. : I can see you have fallen a victim to the fascinations of the French women !

R. : Surely they are well worth preserving—some of the cleverest women in the world.

AUCKLAND GEDDES : At Princeton University, Wilson was regarded as a schemer.

L. G. : You must not shake my faith in my colleague—at least not for the next three weeks. I cannot listen to such heresies !

21ST.—L. G., Miss Stevenson and Kerr dined with me at Fouquet's.

L. G. : Clemenceau told me to-day that abuse had never kept him awake for an hour, but that he had often been kept awake when he felt that he had made a fool of himself. Wilson said the same thing. I was glad to hear them say that. It is the same with me. I never mind being abused, but if I feel that I have made a fool of myself I could kick myself out of bed. I have another bit of news. The Germans have replied saying they will send great personages. That is a regular climb-down and very significant. I have the telegram here—(handing it to me). You can send it off to-night. Now let us see—how shall we put it ? Shall we call them "great personages" ?

Miss Stevenson suggested "high personages," which was accepted. We then tore some sheets of paper out of the head

waiter's account book and Miss Stevenson wrote the message in pencil.

L. G. said, "That shows the advantage of being firm. When we drew up the telegram I suggested it should read, 'as heads of states we decline to receive messengers.' That pleased old Clemenceau. He turned round and gave that sharp sort of click that he gives when he is pleased. He has a remarkable eye."

Someone said, "He has a sad eye."

L. G. : Yes, when in repose.

L. G. went on to say that the other day, in the middle of a conference at the rue Nitot, Clemenceau said to him, "Where is that picture of Lady Michelham?"<sup>1</sup> L. G. replied, "In the other room." The old boy at once jumped up and went off with Pichon to see the picture. When they returned, they were in high glee.

[I did not say so, but it occurred to me that this might well have been a pretext to get out of the room so as to tell Pichon something he did not want the others to hear. Probably this explanation had occurred to L. G., as he himself is rather prone to such expedients.]

23RD.—Great excitement to-day over President Wilson's public declaration on the Italian situation. I waited for L. G. at the rue Nitot. When he came in at about 7 o'clock he said, "Well, the fat is in the fire at last ! It is a pity that Wilson sent out the statement so hurriedly. On Sunday he produced it and read it to Clemenceau and me. Meanwhile I have been trying to bring about a settlement. If I had had more time, I think I might have done so. Now it is impossible to say what will happen. The Italians have acted badly. I want you to make it quite clear to the Press that, under the Pact of London, Fiume went to Croatia. We stand by the Treaty. We have told the Italians that we think they are unwise to press for all they are entitled to under it, but that if they insist we shall support them. We have, however, also indicated that we shall insist on the portion of the Treaty relating to Fiume being observed. The President read the statement again to-night. He is

<sup>1</sup> The portrait by Baldini, which had been much admired by members of the delegation.

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## THE PEACE CONFERENCE AND AFTER

very pleased with it. Old Clemenceau said it was very good. He is an old dog. He had heard it all before and so had I. The position is very serious."

R. : It seems strange that after all the secrecy that has been observed one of the Plenipotentiaries should appeal to the peoples of the world over the head of one of his colleagues with whom he has a difference of opinion, and in particular to the nation represented by that colleague. Which of the Fourteen Points does that come under ?

L. G. only laughed. I dashed off to communicate the information to the newspaper correspondents who had been anxiously waiting for an hour. Later I telephoned a long statement to London. Then I returned to the P.M.'s to dinner, arriving there at 8.45 p.m.. Auckland Geddes and young Spring-Rice<sup>1</sup> were dining. L. G. full of facetious observations concerning the Press and the crisis. He said to me, "This is a god-send to you. I saw you try to look miserable when I told you what had happened. But it was a poor attempt. You were evidently delighted."

The conversation turned on Wilson.

L. G. : I am one of the few people who think him honest. I think he has a genuine love of liberty and is genuinely anxious to improve the position of the under-dog. He is against the domination of the rich. Occasionally he has to deviate for political reasons, but every politician has to do that. He has got to keep afloat in order to give effect to his principles. Mr. Gladstone had to do that. Many people called him an unscrupulous old scoundrel, but when all is said, he stood for certain things, although in the course of fifty years of political life he had become very wily in trying to secure his objects and often had to make temporary sacrifices which he considered justified by the end in view. (Then, laughing,) Do you remember the cynical remark, "If you want to succeed in politics, you must keep your conscience well under control" ?

Somebody said, "Well, that would not give — much trouble."

L. G. (laughing) : I don't agree. But he is a very fine

<sup>1</sup>Son of Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, British Ambassador to the United States, 1912-18.

driver. He drives his conscience on the snaffle and always has it well in hand.

The conversation turned on public speaking. L. G. said that Clemenceau thought Viviani<sup>1</sup> the best speaker in France. He himself did not think Wilson a good speaker, but he said arresting things and was a good phrase-maker. I said Wilson had a very attractive method of delivery—very insinuating, and that he gave the appearance, at any rate, of sincerity.

L. G. (laughing) : He always utters the word "world" with such unction—(imitating Wilson's pronunciation).

We talked of Bryan<sup>2</sup> and his two great speeches. L. G. repeated what I set down on other occasions. He said that Bryan's opening, "Some people will say that I have run my course ; some will say that I have not fought the fight ; but no one can say that I have not kept the faith," was one of the finest he had ever heard. But he said that when he heard Bryan speak he was very disappointed. Spring-Rice gave an interesting description of Wilson's speech when America declared war. He said that he read it in a comparatively low voice, and except on one occasion without any emphasis. The effect was very remarkable. I said that in a nation of "spell-binders" a quiet, concise and direct speaker had a great advantage. In America a man must be either a super-spell-binder or adopt a style which was unusual. L. G. and Geddes agreed.

Geddes and I both said that Americans were doing their best to appropriate the trade of the world, and that while Wilson was doing the big bow-wow, American commercial men were busily preparing their plans and putting them into execution.

L. G. : Well, that is what they always say about Great Britain. They say that the British carry on their trade with a missionary as an advance guard, and that when they enter a war they always come out of it with a nice fat profit. As to trade, there are plenty of orders, and if our merchants and manufacturers know their business, they will get them. The difficulty is to get the goods produced.

When we went into the drawing-room, L. G. called upon

<sup>1</sup>French Premier and Foreign Minister, June 1914–October 1915; delegate to Washington Conference, 1921; d. 1925.

<sup>2</sup>William Jennings Bryan, the U.S. statesman; d. 1925.

Auckland Geddes to sing, which he did with great effect, producing Scottish soldier songs with gusto. L. G. was much pleased with the singing and joined in the choruses with an imperfect Scottish accent. The Scottish songs were interspersed with pianoforte solos by Spring-Rice.

About 10 o'clock, a letter arrived from Orlando stating that he was leaving to-morrow and expressing his appreciation of the sympathetic treatment he had received from L. G..

In a few minutes Hankey arrived with Captain Gibson, just back from Germany. L. G. said that Orlando must be asked to breakfast and that he must try to get him to continue the negotiations. Then he, Kerr, Hankey and Miss Stevenson went into another room, where he dictated a letter to Orlando, inviting him, Sonnino and his chief secretary, Count Aldovrandi, to breakfast. I drove Davies into Paris with the letter. He found Orlando surrounded by his compatriots all in a state of great excitement. Orlando declined the invitation, with the result that L. G. called to see him on the following morning, and after a day of negotiation Orlando went off to Rome to consult the Italian Parliament.

24TH.—I had tea at the rue Nitot, where the Conference was sitting. The house was surrounded by motor cars. In the hall were President Wilson's detectives. While I was having tea, in came L. G.. I said, "Won't you have some tea?" He said, "Yes, but I suppose you haven't got any ice-cream?" pointing to the room in which the Conference was sitting.

At 7.30, Kerr dashed round with the result of the meeting, which I telephoned at once to London, afterwards communicating the news to the Press at my evening meeting. L. G., M. Thomas, the French Socialist, Professor Mantoux, the interpreter, and Kerr dined with me at the Café Voisin.

25TH.—L. G. remarked to Kerr :

"Garvin<sup>1</sup> is the only person who understood the inwardness of my speech in the House of Commons. He has a touch of genius. Did you read his article in the *Observer*? He saw that the meaning of my speech was a declaration that I intended to pin my faith to democracy."

PARIS : 26TH.—Drove with L. G. to Amiens, where we

<sup>1</sup>J. L. Garvin, editor of the *Observer*.

stayed the night. The party consisted of Esmond Harmsworth,<sup>1</sup> Kerr, J. T. Davies, Miss Stevenson, Miss Belmont and Col. Strode-Jackson, a gallant soldier and celebrated athlete, who was seconded to assist me in my work for the Press.

27TH (SUNDAY).—Early this morning we started for the Vimy Ridge, visiting Arras *en route*. We lunched on the Ridge amidst ruins and debris. We returned through Péronne, Compiègne, Bapaume, etc.. L. G. took the keenest interest in the military incidents connected with the places through which we passed, saying, "There was very heavy fighting here. This is where so-and-so happened."

Dined with him on my return. Henry Wilson there. Much talk about letters from home criticising President Wilson. Everyone present seemed to have received communications of this sort. Colonel Jackson said, "There is very strong feeling against him in Paris." I said, "Our people are fed up with Wilson. They are tired of playing second fiddle, considering what we have done in the war."

L. G. said that the destination of the German mercantile shipping was settled; that under the arrangement America was to get 600,000 tons, which is double what she has lost. I said, "Surely this is not in accordance with Wilson's declaration that America expects nothing and will get nothing out of the war." I did not say, but thought, that the British people would get a shock when they heard of this settlement.

L. G. (to Henry Wilson): Your cousin has been giving us a lot of trouble. I had quite a row over the compensation. I said, "Australia is a long way off, but she has given more lives than America." The President replied, "Yes, but America was indispensable." I said, "Yes, and so was Australia. If Australia had not done what she did, when she did, America's efforts would have been useless." This argument did not seem to have occurred to him. Evidently he did not want to continue the discussion, and said, "Very well, then!"

HENRY WILSON: You know what I think of my cousin and what I have always thought of him. His latest escapade has not surprised me.

L. G.: The motives for most actions are mixed. No

<sup>1</sup>Lord Rothermere's son.



doubt his Italian statement was actuated by several motives. First he has a sincere desire to support small and struggling nations. Second, he is very vain. We begged him to defer publishing his statement. He said he meant to publish it, but he issued it unbeknown to us.

Earlier in the day I said to L. G., "There is no doubt that Wilson feels his unpopularity. He is beginning to try to work the Press in his usual fashion."

L. G. (thoughtfully) : He is a cold creature. When I returned from London the other day, he never congratulated me on my success in the House of Commons. He never said a word, and after the election he never mentioned the matter.

[To me, R., it looks like a battle between two masters of craft. Each thinks that he is cleverer at the game than the other, with the result that each is frequently taken at a disadvantage.]

L. G. : I wanted to see you (Henry Wilson) about the form of the guarantee to France. A. J. B. has settled it to-day, I believe. I hope he has not made a mistake in the terms. I thought it important that you should see it.

H. W. : Yes, I heard about it. The suggestion is that we should give a guarantee for, say, fifteen years.

L. G. : We have been having trouble with old Foch.

H. W. : Yes, I saw the interview. I can't think why the old boy gave it.

L. G. : Foch said to Clemenceau, "I want to see the terms before I summon the Germans." Clemenceau declined, whereupon Foch said to him, "Am I only a messenger?" Clemenceau answered, "Yes, for this purpose you are!" He also spoke to Foch about the interview. Foch is interfering in what he does not understand. Had Bismarck's advice been taken in 1870 there would have been no Alsace-Lorraine and probably this war would never have occurred. Moltke, however, insisted upon territory.

H. W. : That was because he wanted to make the road to Paris easy.

R. : Yes, but no doubt someone wanted the valuable mineral deposits which made the transaction a good bargain for the Germans!

H. W. : Of course the French are very strong on the Rhine for a boundary. They always have been, and from a military point of view I am bound to say there is a good deal to be said for it, although "the Frocks" don't think so. But in my opinion it would be insufficient to hold the bridge-heads. You would have to occupy the whole of the bank.

R. : How many men would that take ?

H. W. : It all depends on what sort of occupation you mean.

L. G. : Foch is asking us to leave a division (I think it was a division) of soldiers.

H. W. : What a funny request ! A division !

L. G. : I remember that when Cambon<sup>1</sup> (cunning old thing !) came to the Cabinet in 1914, he said, "If you will send a division only it will put courage into us !" He knew quite well that a division meant complete British intervention. No doubt that is what Foch wants to ensure now.

H. W. : Well, we can let him have a division !

L. G. : What is the truth about the Battle of the Marne ? Who really conceived it ?

H. W. : I think Grandpère Joffre.

L. G. : Briand told me that "the Frocks," as you call them, insisted upon a stand being made.

H. W. : Well, that may be. I don't know.

L. G. : I daresay it was a joint affair. Most of these things are.

H. W. : Like a salad.

L. G. : Did you have any hard fighting ?

H. W. : Well, not at first. We went so slowly. Do you remember the remarkable Army Order I had to sign owing to another officer's absence ? I am always afraid it will come to light. It read something like this : "The Army will inflict ruthless punishment on the enemy, but at 10 to-morrow morning it will suspend operations." Did you ever see such a thing ? But poor me ! I had to sign it !

L. G. : Did you have heavy fighting afterwards ?

H. W. : Yes, terrific !

L. G. : Do you think our Expeditionary Force saved the day, as some people say ?

<sup>1</sup>French Ambassador in London, 1898-1920 ; d. 1924.

H. W. : Yes, I am bound to say I do ! They put life into the French and of course a hundred thousand well-equipped men at that moment was an important item. I have often thought of the difference of opinion between the French and us. Joffre and the rest thought the Germans would go through Alsace. We thought they would go through Belgium, but we thought the forts were impregnable. Of course we were both wrong. The Germans came through Belgium, and the forts which stood in their way fell like scraps of paper.

## Chapter VIII

*The Germans receive the Peace Terms—Accommodation for the Press—The scene in the conference chamber—President Wilson on  
“The most tactless speech I ever heard.”*

MAY 1ST, 1919.—Henry Wilson said to me to-day, “You know what I think about my cousin—at least he says he is my cousin. I have held the same opinion from the first. L. G. would not agree, but my views are being verified by my cousin’s actions.”

I said, “L. G. is like all people who talk well. He admires other good talkers. He admires the way in which Wilson puts the democratic case.”

H. W. : My dear, in the course of my life I have discovered that talking has very little to do with thinking and still less with action !

With this cynical and epigrammatic observation we parted, being of the same mind in this respect.

WEEK ENDING MAY 3RD.—After a hard struggle the Council of Three have agreed to the publication of the Peace Terms contemporaneously with their being handed to the Germans. This decision has not been openly indicated, but the thing has just happened.

I think my contention that the Germans would certainly publish the terms if we did not, and my reminder of what took place when the Armistice terms were handed over, had their effect. I have also been engaged in fighting for the right of the Press to be present when the Peace Terms are handed over.

On May 2nd the papers passed the following resolution, which I presented to the Council of Three on May 3rd.

“At a meeting of British correspondents held at the Maison Dufayel on May 2nd, 1919, Sir George Riddell in the Chair, the following resolution was passed :

“This meeting of journalists desires strongly to represent

to the Peace Conference that it is essential in the interests of the Allied people that accredited correspondents of the Allied Press should be admitted when the Peace Terms are handed to the Germans, so that an adequate report of the proceedings may be supplied to the public.' Among the reasons which may be urged in support of this claim is the fact that the German Delegation comprises a number of journalists who are acting in various capacities, and that the probability is that they will furnish reports to the German Press based upon direct observation of the proceedings. The British correspondents recognise that the accommodation is restricted, but they see no reason why a limited number of correspondents should not be admitted. They wish to make it plain that they do not claim special privileges ; they are of opinion that arrangements should be made for the admission of representatives of the Press of all the nations concerned."

The Americans say that Wilson is in favour of the Press being present ; that the French allege there is not enough accommodation in the room ; and that L. G. is strongly opposed to the presence of journalists. His reasons are said to be that it would be undignified and unfair that the German delegates, who will occupy an anxious position, should be written up by the Allied Press. I am bound to confess that I have heard him say very much the same things, and there is no doubt that all through the Conference he and his colleagues have not favoured publicity. We have had to fight inch by inch. Like all autocrats, they like to work in secret and to tell the public just as much as suits their purpose. This week, Sir William Sutherland, one of L. G.'s secretaries, has arrived in Paris, no doubt for the purpose of interviewing the Paris correspondents regarding the Peace Terms. I have been busy arranging for the preparation of a summary of the terms. At my suggestion a summary has been written by Mair<sup>1</sup> who has been working with me. It runs to about ten thousand words. Mair is a clever fellow and the summary is first-rate. The arrangements for cabling it all over the world have been complicated. They have been carried out most efficiently by Mair, Colonel Waley Cohen, head of the Signals Department,

<sup>1</sup>George Herbert Mair, journalist ; d. 1926.

Mr. Brown of the G.P.O., and Turner of Reuters, who all deserve special pats on the back and good hard ones. They have worked like Trojans.

I prepared a paper on the indemnity question, with the object of explaining to editors the technical questions involved. I also obtained one from Mr. Keynes, of the Financial Mission. According to him, the Germans can pay not more than two thousand millions. I had to delete some of the paragraphs. I issued the two papers to the Press, first showing them to Kerr. Subsequently I sent copies to Lord Cunliffe, who was much perturbed and begged me not to let the papers go out, as he said that if the contents were published the Germans would probably decline to sign the Treaty, etc.. I said the papers had gone and there was nothing more to be done, which gave the old boy a shock.

4TH (SUNDAY).—Went with L. G. and party to the woods near Fontainebleau, where we had lunch at the Hôtel du Forêt. I drove with Bonar Law. He said he thought L. G. had got the better of Wilson, who had had to give up most of his Fourteen Points.

R. : The freedom of the seas has been relegated to the background, and we have got the German colonies, Mesopotamia and Palestine. Our protectorate of Egypt has been confirmed. They are big things.

Bonar Law talked much of Northcliffe, and was anxious to know how he took his lathering by L. G.. B. L. said that L. G.'s attack on Northcliffe was very dexterous, but that the speech as a whole was open to serious Parliamentary criticism, had there been anyone to criticise. He then went on to describe what he would have said in reply, pointing out L. G.'s previous alliance with N.—the fact that he had appointed him to two offices in his Government and that nothing had occurred warranting L. G.'s change of attitude except the fact that N. had had the temerity to disagree with him. I said it might also have been pointed out that L. G. had told the H. of C. nothing about the Peace negotiations, and that he had diverted the whole of the debate to Russia and N., apparently with the object of avoiding the real questions at issue.

BONAR LAW : Yes, I quite agree, but the truth is that

nine-tenths of the H. of C. hate N. and were only too glad to see L. G. go for him.

B. L. said that after N. wrote his letter regarding, I think, the retirement of Lord Cowdray,<sup>1</sup> B. L. advised L. G. to attack N., but for some reason L. G. did not think the time ripe.

B. L. said he had told L. G. that the H. of C. is an amorphous body with no nerves or joints and no real parties, with the exception of the Labour Party, and no objective.

Returning to N., he said that N. had remarked that the Press could make or ruin a statesman. B. L. thought this wrong. He thought that the Press could help to make a statesman, but that when a man had reached a certain position, the Press could not drag him down if he were really competent. I said I agreed. I complimented B. L. on his management of the H. of C.. He said he thought that after the Peace the House would not submit to anyone leading it except the P. M., and that L. G. would have to do the job himself.

We talked of the Cabinet system. Bonar Law said that when he joined Asquith's Cabinet he was astonished at the lack of method—the absence of any agenda or minutes. He told Asquith this. A. said that everyone who joined the Cabinet made the same observation, but speedily became reconciled to the method of doing business and saw its advantages for the special purpose. B. L. said, in reply to my enquiry, that he thought the present system would require revision by including in the Cabinet more leading Ministers, but the difficulty was to keep the body within reasonable dimensions. He had tried to make up a list, but hitherto had failed to make one that would include every Minister who should be included, and which at the same time would not form an unwieldy body. However, he said that the task would now have to be tackled afresh.

I said I thought some Ministers resented being sent for. B. L. agreed and said that no Minister had ever conducted such a personal Government as L. G.. I suggested the elder Pitt and Walpole.

B. L. : Yes, their Governments were personal, but the King exercised more executive powers in those days.

<sup>1</sup>President, Air Board, 1917 ; d. 1927.

I said, "You and L. G. have worked well together. Your loyalty and lack of ambition have been very useful."

B. L. : Yes, I recognise that if I had been ambitious it would have made things very difficult, but I have no ambitions and unfortunately I have lost all zest in my work. You know what I mean. They tell me that I am looking better than I was. It is true that I am feeling better physically, but never since the war started have I felt so depressed and so lacking in energy. I am afraid that my nerve is not what it was. I have had to bear a great deal.

He said that Asquith was a nice man to work with, but very tricky, of which he gave instances. He expressed the opinion that, if it had not been for Kitchener, Asquith might have gone right through the war. He added that Kitchener let him down.

I said, "Yes, but he did great things all the same, and in a measure held Asquith up."

B. L. : That is quite true, but in the end K.'s incompetence ruined Asquith. He was not the man to handle such a state of affairs. I (B. L.) remember that when K. left, Robertson wanted to get someone plastic at the War Office whom he could handle as he liked. His idea was Walter Long. I telephoned to Asquith saying that I wished to see him. I told him that if he appointed Long I should resign. I said, "You must appoint L. G.. He wants the job and you will have to give it to him. You had better do it with a good grace. If you wanted to break with him, perhaps at one time you might have done so, but now he is too strong for you. If you stand in his way he will probably crush you."

We spoke of the Dardanelles. I reminded him of the visit L. G. and I paid to him at Margate, where we found him, Winston and others playing lawn tennis, and when B. L. came in his tennis flannels and discussed the position with L. G..

B. L. : Yes, I remember well. That was the only military question on which I ever took a firm view, but I felt I was right—absolutely right. If we had gone on we should have bled to death. So I stuck in my toes !

He told me an amusing story of a Canadian politician given to the bottle who was going on an important mission to the



U.S.A.. A friend said to him, "It is a ticklish job." He replied, "I am very good at walking on a tight-rope, I can tell you!" Whereupon his friend whispered, "If it is only the rope that is tight all will be well!"

Bonar told me another good story about a Canadian politician, the worse for a good lunch, who made a very injudicious speech. The reporter waited until he thought the politician would be sober, and then went to his room. He said, "I have come to check over your speech, sir," and read out his notes. When he had finished, the politician glared at him and exclaimed, "I never said anything of the kind! This is what I really said," and thereupon dictated quite a good speech. The reporter thanked him and was leaving the room when the politician called him back and said solemnly, "Let this be a lesson to you, young man. Never try to report a speech when you are drunk."

5TH.—The Council of Three, in consequence of our resolution, proceeded to Versailles to look at the accommodation. As a result they decided to admit forty-five journalists, including five Germans, ten of the forty to represent Great Britain and the British Dominions. This is another score for the Press. At the end L. G. played up well and did his best to secure adequate representation. He said that Canada and Australia, having regard to their contributions to the war, were entitled to as much consideration as any of the smaller nations, none of whom had done so much. Wilson, apparently foreseeing difficulties with his own Press, was not very keen on the Dominions being represented, but when L. G. put the point as to our overseas effort, Clemenceau agreed with him and said that the Dominions were entitled to special representation. Later on Hankey telephoned to say I was to have an extra seat for myself, which is gratifying considering how much I have stung the authorities. It shows they are of a forgiving disposition at any rate. The truth is that Hankey is one of the best-tempered, most agreeable, kindest men I have ever met—a real Christian in every sense of the word—as well as one of the most efficient. I am off to Versailles in the morning.

7TH.—When I got up, I said to myself, "This is going to be one of the most interesting days of my life." And it was.

At two o'clock I started for Versailles, driving through the Bois de Boulogne, St. Cloud, and the lovely woods of Versailles. There was nothing to show that this was a momentous day in the world's history. Then suddenly I heard behind me the insistent and prolonged note of a motor-horn. It was Clemenceau in his Rolls-Royce, driving to Versailles at fifty miles an hour, one gloved hand on each knee and "a smile on the face of the Tiger" that made one feel that the drama was really beginning. He was gone in a flash.

In the old French town of Versailles the people were going about their business just as usual, except in the neighbourhood of the Trianon Palace Hotel, where the Treaty was to be handed over. Here there were small crowds and groups of soldiers, with their steel helmets, rifles and bayonets. By the way, nothing is more striking in France than the splendid appearance of the French soldier—well-groomed, well-fed and solid to the backbone.

The Trianon Palace Hotel has been the headquarters of the Allies throughout the war. It is a great white building standing in beautiful grounds. No fewer than three different tickets were required to enable me to reach the door. I alighted amidst a crowd of soldiers, officials, photographers and cinema operators. Indeed the combined whirr of the cinema cameras was almost equal to that of a small aeroplane.

Eventually, by the use of another ticket, I arrived in the fateful room. Imagine a coffee-room of a very, very high-class hotel, decorated in white throughout, with great windows opening on to beautiful gardens in which the trees stood dressed in their fresh Spring green. While waiting, I stepped the room, and found it to be about seventy-five feet square. It was set with four large tables in the form of a quadrangle, a small space being left at one of the top ends in order to enable M. Dutasta, the Chief Secretary of the Peace Conference, to enter the square formed by the tables to deliver the Treaty to Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, the chief German delegate.

The journalists were the first to take their places. They sat at the bottom of the room behind the German delegates and facing the head table. Most appropriately they sat on

gilded chairs covered with red satin. Five chairs were reserved for the German pressmen, who looked gloomy and ill at ease. Meanwhile, the German delegates were taking off their hats and coats in the ante-room, and it was interesting to see these being numbered and placed amongst the garments of the Allied representatives.

At three precisely the Allied delegates began to take their places. In the middle of the top table sat Clemenceau, on his right President Wilson, and on his left L. G. Balfour, Bonar Law, Barnes and Sir Joseph Ward were also at the top table. The remaining places were occupied by the American delegates. M. Paderewski<sup>1</sup> was one of the last to enter, looking very much like the representations one sees of the British Lion.

Then there was a pause before the chief attendant announced the German Plenipotentiaries. All eyes were turned to the door half way down the room on the right of the chairman. In they walked, stiff, awkward-looking figures, and, as I thought, comparing badly with the Allied representatives. They all wore morning coats, and were followed by their secretaries and two interpreters, who sat at a separate table on the right of the German delegates. As the Germans walked in, after a moment's hesitation everyone stood up. Brockdorff-Rantzau looked ill, drawn and nervous. He walks with a slight limp. His complexion is yellowish, and there are black rings under his eyes which are sunk deep in his head. When he was taking off his coat, I noticed that his face was covered with beads of perspiration. He strikes one as a stiff, precise, industrious, mechanical, tactless sort of man. His colleagues looked in better health and more at their ease. One of them rejoices in a bull-neck and a red beard which would do credit to the conventional stage robber in the *Babes in the Wood*.

The Germans being seated, Clemenceau rose and began the proceedings in his usual concise and business-like way. He declared the Conference open, and delivered a short speech which everyone felt was absolutely appropriate to the occasion—not a word too much or too little. He gave no evidence of nervousness and was never at a loss for a word. As he spoke,

<sup>1</sup>Premier of Poland (1919) and the chief Polish delegate.

one felt that one was in the presence of a great historic figure—this wonderful old man of seventy-seven—the spokesman of hundreds of millions of people, but as calm and unperturbed as if he were speaking in the Chamber of Deputies. Owing to having eczema on his hands, he always wears grey suede gloves, which give him a formal air. Early associations have a curious way of sticking to people through life, and, notwithstanding that Clemenceau has abandoned his profession for so many years, he still has somewhat the appearance of a medical man. The speech was interpreted into English by Professor Mantoux, the celebrated interpreter of the Peace Conference, who is almost as well known as the members of the Council of Four, and then into German. While this was being done, M. Dutasta, (Chief Secretary of the Peace Conference) a thick-set, bald-headed little man, suddenly emerged, and passing through the opening in the tables, walked rapidly across the quadrangle and handed the Treaty to Count Brockdorff-Rantzau. The Count received it with a stiff little bow, looked at it for a moment in its white paper cover and placed it quietly on the table at his left side.

After Clemenceau's speech had been interpreted, he enquired whether anyone wished to speak. Thereupon Count Brockdorff-Rantzau put up his hand after the manner of a school-boy and, remaining seated, began to read his speech, which was interpreted sentence by sentence, first in French and then in English. The interpreting arrangements presented comic features. First the interpreters stood at the small table at the right of the German delegates. They had been provided with only one copy of the Count's speech, so that when interpreting they reminded one of part singers having only one piece of music between them. The interpreter into French was not very sure of his ground, and made continual halts and stumbles. The interpreter into English was fluent, but spoke with a strong American accent and delivered his message in the truculent fashion of a nervous man ill at ease who desires to hide his feelings. He was evidently very nervous and I saw him frequently wiping the perspiration from his hands.

Before many sentences had been translated the interpreters moved to the back of the Count. This did not suit

Clemenceau, who gave instructions that they should be brought into the quadrangle, where they stood facing the top table. The length and tone of the Count's speech were obviously a surprise to the Allied delegates. We had been told that the proceedings would be over in five minutes, and that they would be of such a formal character that it would not be really worth while for the Press to attend. As it turned out, the proceedings were anything but formal. As the Count proceeded it was interesting to watch the effect produced on some of the principal figures in the scene. Clemenceau, Wilson, and Lloyd George in particular listened most intently. Clemenceau slowly tapped on the table with an ivory paper-knife and the President toyed, as is his custom, with a pencil in his hand with which he always seems to be about to make notes, but rarely uses. When the Count uttered some of his most pungent and tactless remarks, Clemenceau turned to Lloyd George and evidently made biting comments on what was being said. When L. G. is roused or annoyed, he often shows it by moving uneasily in his seat as if he were about to get up and assault someone. Needless to say on this occasion these signs were not lacking. He too devoted his attention to an unfortunate ivory paper-knife, which was observed to snap and break. Afterwards I saw the pieces lying on the table, but unhappily too far away for acquisition. President Wilson leaned over and joined in the *sotto voce* conversation. At last the speech and its interpretations were concluded, and Clemenceau abruptly declared the proceedings at an end. The Germans walked slowly out of the room, and after a few minutes were followed by the Allied delegates, the Council of Four proceeding to the Conference Room in which the Allied Staff have held so many momentous meetings. It was interesting to see Marshal Foch marching down the side corridor, which has taken its place in Hansard in connection with the Maurice Debate,<sup>1</sup> smoking a cigar, and smiling as much as to say, "I always told you that those Germans were

<sup>1</sup>In May 1918 Maj.-Gen. Sir F. Maurice charged Mr. Lloyd George with giving incorrect figures of reinforcements. Mr. Asquith thereupon initiated a debate in the House, but it collapsed when Mr. Lloyd George proved that his figures had been supplied by Sir F. Maurice's deputy.

not repentant, and now what I have said has been proved."

Much indignation was expressed that Count Brockdorff-Rantzau spoke sitting down. Whether this was an intentional slight, or due to ignorance or physical incapacity, has not yet been disclosed.

There were two hundred and five people present, only one of whom was a woman—a Miss Allison, a War Office shorthand writer who is expert in German, and who was present in order to take down Count Brockdorff-Rantzau's speech. The notes of the English translations were taken by Mr. Sylvester, attached to Hankey's department, who is reputed to be the quickest shorthand writer and typist in Europe, and an American expert. The basement of the Hotel was devoted to telegraphic and telephonic apparatus, and while the Count was speaking the machines were busily at work. The notes were transcribed in a small bedroom on the third floor. There I found Sylvester at the typewriter, composing the report with the assistance of the other two, the typewritten sheets being laid on the bed—a curiously informal way of producing the report of one of the most remarkable meetings in history, but like many other informal things, quite effective. The report was admirably turned out, both as regards quality and time.

The proceedings ended at about 4 o'clock. Altogether it was a wonderful afternoon. As President Wilson said to me, as he walked out of the Conference, "The Germans are really a stupid people. They always do the wrong thing. They always did the wrong thing during the war. That is why I am here. They don't understand human nature. This is the most tactless speech I have ever heard. It will set the whole world against them."

To turn from grave to gay, on the road home I gave a lift to an interesting man whom I met by chance. The conversation turned on the extraordinary careers of Clemenceau, L. G., Wilson, Briand and other great men. "Well," said my companion, "do you know that Charlie Chaplin, who now makes £200,000 a year, used to serve behind a bar, and so did his brother Syd, who is now his manager. Many's the drink with which they've served me. Their parents live in

*May 1919]*

## THE PEACE CONFERENCE AND AFTER

Camberwell to this day. Charlie joined Fred Karno's knock-about company. Then some bright-eyed cinema man spotted him. You know the rest. I think that beats Clemenceau, Lloyd George & Co. hollow ! " While we were trying to decide the question we reached Paris, and I found myself wondering whether it is better to be born with a high-class brain or funny feet.

After the Conference, while I was waiting in the corridor, L. G. came out of the room where the Council of Four were sitting, with a paper in his hand, and trounced Philip Kerr and two Foreign Office officials for having allowed a paragraph to appear on the Mandatory arrangements. Subsequently the paper was handed to me. I heard L. G. calling out in the passage, " Riddell ! Riddell ! " He asked me to drive back with him, but I had to stop to get the speeches off. I had my tall hat on, and he said, " I don't know whether a man with a hat like that will condescend to drive back with me ! " I said, " No ! Certainly not ! "

## Chapter IX

*A talk with Ramsay MacDonald—President Wilson as a professor—Clemenceau the destroyer—If L. G. had been Premier in 1914—The German reply to the Peace Terms.*

MAY 8TH, 1919.—L. G. asked me to golf with him, Sir Robert Borden<sup>1</sup> and Kerr. He said :

“Those insolent Germans made me very angry yesterday. I don’t know when I have been more angry. Their conduct showed that the old German is still there. Your Brockdorff-Rantzaus will ruin Germany’s chances of reconstruction. But the strange thing is that the Americans and ourselves felt more angry than the French and Italians. I asked old Clemenceau why. He said, ‘Because we are accustomed to their insolence. We have had to bear it for fifty years. It is new to you and therefore it makes you angry.’”

R. : It was a great day for Clemenceau. I think it was a wonderful sight—this brave old man explaining the views of millions of people on one of the greatest occasions in history—clear, imperturbable and perfect in every way.

L. G. : I said to him, “This is a great day for you.” He replied, “I don’t mind telling you that it is.” And then I nearly made one of those horrible mistakes which we are all so apt to make. I was just about to say, “What a splendid ending for you !” but luckily I stopped myself in time. Of course, what I thought is true. What an ending to the life of a man who has lived for his country—a man who fifty years ago saw from the heights of Montmartre the useless and ruthless burning by the Germans of the Castle of St. Cloud !

10TH.—Went to the Hôtel du Forêt, Fontainebleau, with L. G. and party for the week-end. He had ample opportunity to indulge his love for open-air life, all meals being taken on the terrace. Before we started I called at the rue Nitot, where I waited until L. G.’s arrival from the Conference at the

<sup>1</sup>Prime Minister of Canada and chief Canadian delegate at Peace Conference



President's house. He brought with him the first German notes on the Peace Terms. Holding the papers aloft, he said, "What will you give me for these exclusive?" I replied, "£10,000!" Whereupon, laughing loudly, he thrust them into my hands, saying, "They are yours on those terms. Take and publish them at once." I went off and cabled the notes to London, of course for general publication, and then we started.

11TH (SUNDAY).—In the morning we walked in the woods and sat and talked. L. G. told me that the Italians were behaving very badly. He said they had landed troops at Smyrna and sent a fleet there. He said, "This is a curious commentary on the prophecies of a peaceful, unselfish world!"

L. G. says President Wilson is furious, and has every justification for being so.

Later Arthur Balfour, Ian Malcolm and Hankey arrived. We drove to Fontainebleau and walked about the grounds. L. G. and Balfour talked much of Napoleon, and then L. G. spoke of his Parliamentary experiences when he entered the House.

L. G. (to Balfour): I used to watch you carefully. Your method of treating the Irish interested me immensely. I don't mind telling you that you were very insolent. I never saw anything more insolent. But, notwithstanding this, they respected you, and I believe that in their heart of hearts they liked you, as everyone else does.

This made A. J. B. laugh heartily. L. G. reminded him of some amusing incidents. On one occasion the Irish made a violent attack on Balfour for the treatment accorded to certain political prisoners who were said to be suffering badly in health. A. J. B. knocked the bottom out of the attack by producing the chart showing the weights of the prisoners, which had increased since their incarceration. A. J. B., who had forgotten this, was immensely pleased by the reminiscence, and remarked, "They were strenuous times, but very interesting."

When he left he expressed himself as having had one of the happiest days he had ever experienced, and motored off in a state of high good humour.

L. G. told me that Foch was going to the Front to make

preparations to invade Germany if the Germans declined to sign, and suggested that I should let the newspapers know this, so that the Germans would get an early hint of what was in store for them.

26TH.—Dined with Colonel House<sup>1</sup> and Stannard Baker, head of the American Press Department. House told two good stories of old Clemenceau. Clemenceau said to him, when House was attending the Conference in the President's absence, "I can get on with you. You are practical. I understand you, but talking to Wilson is something like talking to Jesus Christ!"

When the Armistice conditions were being finally settled at Versailles, someone said, "Well now, have we forgotten anything?" After a pause Clemenceau remarked, "Yes! We have forgotten something very important. We have omitted to ask for the Kaiser's breeches!"

House told me that he was trying to get L. G. to go to America in October to attend the first meeting of the League of Nations. He was good enough to add that the President and he hoped I would go with L. G., and would do my best to persuade him to go. He also expressed the hope that the newspapers would be prepared to hold an all-world Press conference in Washington at the same time, and asked me to propose this to our people and take charge of the arrangements.

Travelling to France to-day met Ramsay MacDonald,<sup>2</sup> with whom I had a long chat. He reminded me of the dinner at my house on August 2nd, 1914, at which he was present. He referred to a witty remark made by John Simon, who had his resignation in his pocket. Simon said that he meant to resign. Masterman remarked, "You must think of your constituency!" whereupon Simon hissed across the table, as Ramsay MacDonald said, 'like the swish of a sword': "You are a wonderful authority on constituencies, I know!"<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Peace Commissioner and formerly President Wilson's personal representative in Europe.

<sup>2</sup> Now Prime Minister.

<sup>3</sup> A reference to Mr. Masterman's notorious lack of success as a Parliamentary candidate.

MacDonald said that in the afternoon he had met John Morley<sup>1</sup> walking to the Athenæum Club after the historic Cabinet Meeting. He went up to him and asked him what had happened. Morley said, "It is all over. I have resigned." MacDonald said, "Well, we shall have to fight!" Morley said to him, "I am an old man, and what happens does not matter much to me. My career is behind me. Yours is in front of you. Be careful what you do. You are going to make the most important decision of your life. Be careful not to make a mistake." MacDonald answered, "I don't care about the present. I am looking to fifty years hence. What will they say then?" MacDonald gave me the idea of being rather under the weather. He said, "I am going to Italy to try to keep the Italian Labour Party from becoming Bolshevik." Then he told me that some man in Russia had been allowed to keep his property because he was a friend of Ramsay MacDonald, and that a woman had told him that the Germans had not shot her husband because he claimed to be MacDonald's friend. He remarked pathetically, "These incidents show that I have not been an entire failure. At any rate I have helped someone." He said he was suffering badly from neuritis and looked old and drawn. He said that Bolshevism was dead as a form of Government.

R. : Lenin will go down to posterity as a great personage.

R. M. : Yes, I agree with that. Russian events have shown that drastic changes are impracticable. You can only go step by step. But had it not been for Lenin the steps would have been very slow and halting. He has infused new life into the betterment movement.

I asked him whether he thought Wilson a great man. He did not answer the question but said that he (R. M.) usually spent Sundays with John Morley. At Morley's house he met an American, who gave an interesting account of Wilson's career as a professor. He said that the trustees at Princeton could not stand him because he was always forming policies in secret without consultation with anyone and then endeavouring to force them upon the institution. The American said further, "Wilson is the sort of man who when he is

<sup>1</sup>Lord Morley; d. 1923.

shaving in the morning thinks of a phrase, and then takes his typewriter and enshrines it in a speech. The sort of man with whom words precede thoughtful decisions instead of a plan of action being succeeded by words of exposition and advocacy."

R. : That is evidently the opinion of an enemy. Wilson, whatever may be his faults, is a thinker and a man of ideas. He is shrewd and crafty, but not practical, and tries to do everything single-handed.

R. M. : I think you are right. Like most epigrams, the American's statement is too sweeping.

PARIS : MAY 27TH.—Met L. G., accompanied by Winston and Hankey, taking a constitutional before going to the meeting at President Wilson's. I walked with them. He said, "How are things in England?"

R. : They are all marking time. You are wanted badly. They all want to know whether the Germans are going to sign and when. I noticed strong indications that the public are losing faith in Parliamentary institutions. Parliament does not seem to be interested in itself, and the public certainly are not interested in it.

L. G. : I agree that I ought to be back as soon as possible. There is no one there with a drive to get things done.

R. : Housing is badly needed.

L. G. : Yes, if I had been there I could have pushed things forward to much better advantage, but I had to stop here. There was no help for it.

Later, went to tea at the rue Nitot. L. G. came in and laughingly remarked, "How is the genial baronet—the man who stimulates the Press to criticise the four men who are endeavouring to make the world spin round the way it ought to spin?"

Later we went for a drive in the Bois. I referred to a letter written by Ibsen in 1870, in which he prophesied what would occur when Prussia had collapsed, and said the only sort of revolution that would be worth while would be a revolution in the spirit of man.

L. G. said this was a fine saying, and described it as

a remarkable prophecy. He added that to-day revolutions mean class selfishness. One sees continual clashes between the selfishness of different classes.

R. : Yes, but the universal poverty of a nation may bring about a revolution.

L. G. : That also is quite true.

28TH.—Dined with L. G.. We talked of Clemenceau. L. G. said that someone told him he was riding with Clemenceau in the Bois. They passed some beautiful women, who kissed their hands to him. The old man returned the compliment and then remarked, "It is hard, is it not, that one has never made a success until now, when it is too late?"

A French statesman told L. G. that Clemenceau never constructed anything. He was always a destroyer. As a result he has no real friends. Clemenceau himself remarked, "My friends have left me, but I still have my teeth and can bite!"

I asked L. G. whether he did not think Clemenceau's speech when the Peace Terms were handed to the Germans a perfect performance. He said, "Yes, not a word too much nor too little. And always the right word. A most wonderful person."

R. : Would it be better to have Clemenceau's tongue or a million pounds?

L. G. : I am not so sure. That terrible tongue has not been an unalloyed blessing. A tongue like that makes many enemies and spoils many friendships, whereas a million pounds is not so dangerous. Luckily we are not called upon to make these choices. The selection is made for us.

R. : Clemenceau speaks excellent colloquial English.

L. G. : He gives the most amusing accounts of his early efforts at English. When he first went to America he asked in a restaurant for "Smashed potatoes." He was very good to-day in dealing with the representatives from Luxemburg. One of them said, "The Allies always favour neutrality." "Yes," replied Clemenceau, "but experience has shown that neutrality is a dangerous thing, so we want to substitute something better for it."

At this juncture the news came through on the telephone

from London that the German Note on the Allied terms had been issued by Reuters and published in the London papers. We were furnished with a summary of the Note.

L. G. : This is a most remarkable proceeding. The terms have not yet been presented to the Allies. It is like writing a letter to a man and publishing it in the newspapers before you send it to him. What an extraordinary people they are ! They always do the wrong thing ! If the published Note is accurate, it looks as if they meant to sign.

9.30 P.M.—We then went for a short walk. The conversation turned on Asquith. I asked L. G. what he thought of Mr. A.'s speech. He said, "I thought it a poor effort—a feeble attempt to reconstitute a great party." L. G. said that Lord Fisher<sup>1</sup> had been lunching with him, which led me to repeat what Fisher had said in 1914 or 1915. I wrote it down at the time. He said every successful war had been waged by one man. He was not certain who would wage the war for us, but was convinced it would not be Asquith, who had not the necessary courage. He was divided in mind whether the war would be run by L. G. or A. J. B., but felt certain it would be one of those two. L. G. was interested and went on to discuss what he would have done had he been in charge in 1914. He said, "I am sure that the war might have been finished in 1917 or 1916 had our effort been properly organised from the beginning. I should have done in 1914 what I did later, namely organised the manufacture and supply of munitions. That would have enabled us to support the Russians, who could then have avoided their terrible retreat. I also had plans regarding the Danube. We might have prevented Bulgaria from going in against us and if we had had an army of a million men supporting our cause in the East that would have led to the downfall of Austria. The Germans could not have held out for long. My proposals are all on paper. They are all a matter of record. The truth is that Asquith was not the man to run the war, and yet people still say, 'If only we had that wise old man at the head of affairs !'"

R. : I hear plenty of people call you an unsafe and

<sup>1</sup> d. 1920.

dangerous man, but your critics' trouble is that they don't know where to find an alternative. If there were one they might give you a hotter time !

Then we went to the Majestic. L. G. talked to Lord Robert Cecil, Barnes and others regarding the German Note. By the way, I hear that Smuts thinks the Peace Terms too stringent and favours substantial concessions to the Germans.

PARIS : MAY 30TH.—Dined with L. G.. After dinner we discussed the German reply. He said that he had been very busy reading it all the morning, and that it required close attention. I said, " Official documents that you read in full are not usually so long. This Note is almost as long as a novel." He and I then counted the words on the first two pages, and estimated the total length at about 65,000 words.

L. G. : The Germans allege that where the principles laid down in the Fourteen Points work in favour of the Allies, they have been applied in preparing the Peace Terms, but where they work in favour of Germany, some other principles have been introduced and acted upon—military strategy or economics, etc.. Of course there may be some ground for that argument.

R. : I can't say. I have not examined the terms with sufficient care, but it is obvious that the Allies could not permit such a question to be debated. They could not debate objections based on an implied charge of humbug and hypocrisy.

L. G. : Yes, I quite agree.

R. : I suppose the discussion will centre upon Silesia and reparations ? Those are the main points.

L. G. : Yes, just read that and tell me what you think of it (handing me the German Note and indicating the portion relating to the division of Silesia). Now, while you are reading that, let us have a little Chopin.

Whereupon the piano began to function, and I plunged into the " higher criticism." Later he said, " Well, what do you think of it ? "

R. : From an ethnographic point of view they seem to make a good case if their facts are correct. It seems to be a question of fact. But the question is, " Were the boundaries

fixed for ethnographic or strategic reasons?" And then it might be difficult for the Allies to go back on the Poles.

L. G. : Yes, but the question of reparations is bound up with this. If the Poles won't give the Germans the products of the mines on reasonable terms, the Germans say they cannot pay the indemnity. Therefore the Allies may be cutting off their noses to spite their faces if they hand the mines to the Poles without regard to the question of the indemnity.

Then in came Ian Malcolm to invite us to Mr. Balfour's to hear some singing. There we remained until after midnight. Ian Malcolm, much to Mr. B.'s surprise, volunteered two songs. Mr. B. in great form—stately and courteous as usual. But he is growing deaf, which evidently pains him a good deal.



## Chapter X

*Concessions to the Germans—Bonar Law on the art of public speaking—President Wilson has his portrait painted—A story about his father—The stoning of the German delegates—Orpen's colour-blindness.*

SUNDAY, JUNE 1ST, 1919.—Lunched at Pré Catalan with Sir Albert Stern<sup>1</sup> and a big party including L. G..

When we got back he again referred to the German Peace Terms. He said, "We had a long meeting this morning, and now I must go back and do an hour's hard thinking."

3RD.—Much comment in French Press and American papers published in Paris regarding the attitude of the British Empire Delegation, and L. G. in particular, towards concessions to the Germans. I had a long talk with Kerr, from whom as a rule, in default of L. G., I receive inspiration for my communications to the Press. Kerr said, "It is most desirable that the Press should not comment upon the attitude of the British Delegation in reference to German concessions." He added, "L. G. says the public will have to leave the matter to him to deal with as best he can. If they are not satisfied with him, they will have to get someone else. It is impossible to discuss these matters in the Press, as the discussion involves all sorts of questions which cannot be openly stated for fear of giving the enemy information and for fear of causing disagreement amongst the Allies. L. G. is anxious to make the very best possible Peace and to make it as soon as possible."

4TH.—I saw Kerr again. He said, "Smuts is very weak on the Peace Terms. In fact he might almost be called pro-German. Of course this does not imply that his sympathies are with the Germans. He is, however, so obsessed with the necessity for making concessions that the effect is a

<sup>1</sup> The mechanised warfare expert.

pro-German attitude. Barnes also is very weak, and other members of the Delegation differ in their views. But substantially speaking there is unanimity. The Delegation think it most desirable that the Germans should sign the Peace Terms. The Germans think, however, that having been invited to comment on the terms the implication is that the Allies will consider their comments, and if satisfied that there is substance in them, grant such modifications as may be reasonable and just."

7TH.—Austen Chamberlain telephoned from London to ask me to organise the publicity for the Peace Loan. I was obliged to refuse, saying this was not in my line.

10TH.—Invited newspaper correspondents to dinner to meet L. G., who in reply to questions made a statement as to the policy of the Council of Four in regard to alterations in the Treaty. He complained of criticisms. I said the publication of untruths and half-truths was due to a mistaken policy of silence, and that if the decision of the British Empire Delegation regarding alterations in the Treaty had been communicated privately to the Press much trouble might have been avoided. He answered that perhaps I was right.

7TH TO 12TH.—Have been urging the Council to publish the German Note on Peace Terms and the Allies' reply. See annexed letter to Hankey of June 7th :

I have spoken to Kerr two or three times regarding the publication of a Summary of the German Note on the Peace Terms, but apparently no decision has yet been reached. The Summary should be prepared for publication either before or contemporaneously with the Allies' answer, which I assume will be handed to the Press at the same time as it is delivered to the Germans. Perhaps you will kindly let me hear from you as to this. If we do not publish the Allies' answer the Germans will certainly publish it, and the information will reach London through Berlin, instead of Paris, as it should do.

8TH (SUNDAY).—Spent the day with L. G.. Before we started he handed me a file of correspondence, saying, "Read that and tell me whether you think the letters ought to be

published. They are the letters I wrote about munitions, before and after Asquith made his speech.<sup>1</sup> I shall be glad to know what you think."

After reading them I said, "They are remarkable documents. I think they should be made public. They make your position clear." He said, "I agree with you. I think they should be published. I must consider the matter. I was always pressing for action. I objected to the few meetings held by the War Council. I thought we should meet much oftener, but Asquith would not agree."

By the way, the other afternoon when I was at the rue Nitot, he came into the secretaries' room and began looking over the drafts of an important document. One had been prepared by Kerr and the other by Mrs. Flower, one of the assistants. He asked me what I thought of them. I said, "Neither is very good, but both contain some good sentences." Thereupon he made up a draft by selecting portions of each. He is very skilful at this sort of thing, and amends or modifies a document with great clearness and literary ability.

We drove to Pontoise, about thirty miles from Paris, where we had lunch at a small restaurant. Bonar Law went with us. He and I drove in one car; L. G., Miss Stevenson and Megan in another, and J. T. Davies, Sutherland<sup>2</sup> and Esmond Harmsworth in a third. Bonar Law spoke a good deal about the reply to the German Peace Note. He thinks that the amount of the indemnity should be fixed and that the Germans should issue bonds for it, payable so much per annum—say eight thousand millions payable at three hundred millions per annum. As a rule his ideas are very sound and his judgment good. For a constructive policy he lacks the force which comes from strong conviction and a strong desire to have one's own way. His attitude towards life is one of negation. He feels that life is a burden. Nothing matters very much. He said that he had given up reading

<sup>1</sup> The much discussed speech at Elswick on April 20th, 1915, in which Asquith stated—as was afterwards learnt, on the authority of French—that the Army had all the shells it needed for the next offensive.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Lloyd George's secretaries.

serious novels because he found them too exacting. He had given up playing bridge since his boy's death because it did not occupy his mind. It had become too mechanical. But he had taken to playing chess again, because the game demanded concentrated attention. I referred to his habit of breaking into an excited conversation in a low tone of voice pitched under the general key instead of above it, as most people pitch their voices at such times. I said his method was very effective. He replied, "It is also an effective method in the House of Commons or any other public body at times of excitement. When I went into the House, I noticed that at extraordinary times Arthur Balfour always began his speech in a low, quiet tone which at once demanded attention and stilled the clamour. I determined to adopt the same plan, and I think it a good one. L. G. usually starts quietly, but as he goes on he often develops the loudness of his tones and often becomes very provocative; but he has his own way and it is very effective."

At lunch L. G. reminded his daughter that Jaurès, the great French socialist, was shot when sitting in a restaurant. He added, "So keep your eye open for suspicious characters as they pass the window." I said, "At any rate you would be able to identify the assassin after the act, although you might not be able to stop him."

L. G. : Yes, for Heaven's sake see that he is hanged or shot.

The heat was terrific. After lunch we went to a Roman Catholic church on the hill, where the service had just begun. Most of the party soon left, but L. G. and I stayed to the end. And a very good service it was. L. G. went off to see the tennis at St. Cloud. Bonar Law, who hates the country, went home. J. T. Davies and I missed L. G.'s car. Therefore we returned to the rue Nitot, where later I had dinner.

After dinner, while I was in the middle of a very interesting conversation with L. G. as to the composition of the Cabinet and the state of affairs at home, Eric Geddes arrived. L. G. was referring, before Geddes came, to the paucity of good men available. He said the Labour men were a complete failure as administrators.

Geddes came armed with a whole sheaf of music, and looking bigger than ever. He was very entertaining and sang his Scotch songs with gusto. As usual the P.M. was much delighted with them and joined heartily in the choruses. He said he had been humming the air of "Jock M'Graw," one of Geddes's masterpieces, all day in anticipation of his arrival in the evening.

13TH.—Had a little talk with President Wilson while he was having his portrait painted by Sir William Orpen.<sup>1</sup> I said I thought the picture good.

<sup>1</sup> Close to my offices was the room occupied by Sir William Orpen as a studio. In March 1919 I arranged with the Government for Sir William and Mr. Augustus John to act as the official artists of the Conference. After a short time Mr. John retired. Sir William frequently came to my Press meetings and enlivened the proceedings by sketching some of the newspaper men. I returned the compliment by frequent visits to his studio when he had interesting sitters. Orpen and I became firm friends, and lunched and dined together very frequently. I sat for him for the official picture of the Signing of the Peace and he afterwards painted my portrait on the instructions of the Newspaper Conference, who very kindly and generously presented it to me as a memento of the War and Peace Negotiations. They also presented Lord Burnham with his picture, painted by Mr. Glyn Philpot.

I have a batch of Orpen's letters, many illustrated with sketches. He was an amusing letter-writer. These two letters give some idea of his style.

My dear Sir George,

28th July, 1919.

Can you help me?

These French Blighters won't sit—I wait and wait for them.

Could you get an official request put through to them?

All the other nations have sat readily enough.

I have arranged for Pershing next week.

The people wanted are Clemenceau, Pichon, Tardieu, Dutasta and Arnavon.

Please help me if you can. I am small and very weak.

My love to you.

I never thanked you for the Robey book but do so now heartily.

ORPS.

*Sir George Riddell*

As Sir William returns to this work on the 28th inst. and the weather shows no sign of changing, anyone who would like to

THE PRESIDENT : I see that he has given me two good lappets (pointing to the bottom of his jaws, shown in the picture as full and overhanging). I don't know whether I look like that.

R. : I think that most of you people who have to speak so much develop a good deal of muscle in that region.

PRESIDENT : You rather suggest that this is one of the penalties of loquacity.

R. : No one would call you loquacious. You are one of the most succinct of speakers and never waste a word.

PRESIDENT (looking pleased) : My father taught me to be brief and to cut down every redundancy. It was a valuable lesson.

He then talked more of his father.

PRESIDENT : My father was always ready in retort. Once he was calling on one of the members of his congregation. My father's horse and trap were drawn up to the kerb. Another rather pompous member came up as my father was crossing the pavement. The member said, "Your horse looks very well, Mr. Wilson. Much better than you do!" "Yes!" said my father. "You see I keep my horse, but I am kept by my congregation!"

I promised the President that I would give him a *Life of Robespierre* with an inscription in it by L. G. who had given it to me. This pleased him.

We talked of Clemenceau. I told him one or two stories of the old man which he had not heard. The President said that he had been reading an account of

help keep him warm, will please forward Hot water Bottles.

My love,

ORPS.

I may here mention that the Weekly Newspaper and Periodical Proprietors' Association, of which I am President, gave me a handsome silver inkstand, which I highly prize. It bears the following gracious inscription :

To SIR GEORGE RIDDELL, BART.,  
from his colleagues of the Weekly Newspaper and  
Periodical Proprietors' Association, in recognition  
of his signal services to the Association and as a  
token of their esteem and regard.



SKETCH BY SIR WILLIAM ORPEN ON LETTER  
TO LORD RIDDELL

Clemenceau's philosophy of life, in which he remarked, "Life consists of the play of unrestrained natural forces"—in other words, the evolutionist's view of sociological development.

PRESIDENT : If you take that view, I don't see how you can have any hope or incentive to action.

Then he remarked to Orpen, "By the way, you asked me to remove my wrist-watch. I see the reason. You wanted to prevent me from seeing how the time was going. But I have a shrewd suspicion that the time has come for me to go."

And off he went after a very cordial good-bye.

17TH.—Dined with L. G.. At dinner he spoke in strong terms of the stoning of the German delegates by the people of Versailles, and characterised it as a disgraceful episode calculated to do much harm. He said they were guests and should have been treated as such. He further said that the Conference should not have been held in France, but in a neutral country, and that the French Press had acted very badly. I said that the authorities were to blame. The common people had not invited the Germans and could not be expected to control their feelings. He did not approve of this, and said I was not doing myself justice and that such a thing could not have happened in our country. I said I did not agree and mentioned that only last week a Liverpool crowd threw a Negro into the dock and drowned him, not because he had done anything wrong but because they did not like Negroes. Also that another Negro had had his throat cut at Cardiff for the same reason.

We talked of our trip to Rheims and Verdun on the following day. He said, "We shall see the site of the famous battle of July 18th last year. The heroism displayed by the French was amazing. Thousands of men had to give up their lives to hold the front trench lightly. Clemenceau told me that as he passed these men on their way to their death he found them carrying bunches of violets which they threw to him shouting 'Vive la France!'"

I said, "A nation capable of such heroism can easily be forgiven small things like the incident at Versailles."

L. G. : I agree. They are wonderful people.

We talked of Clemenceau's eyes. L. G. said he had never seen such glittering brown eyes. Orpen, who was one of the guests, agreed. Mrs. Elinor Glyn, another guest, drove home with Orpen and me. On the way she gave an acute character sketch of L. G.. She is a remarkable woman with a great insight into character—a sort of female philosopher. In some ways she is what you would expect, and in others quite the reverse. She has met all sorts of notabilities and gives entertaining accounts of her experiences. Her appearance is striking—a dead-white skin, a good figure, green eyes and a high domed



forehead, which she does her best to conceal, but unsuccessfully—brains will out !

Orpen is a strange, misleading person. He does not look like an artist. He is a sturdy little man with much the appearance of an ordinary British soldier, except for his humorous, brilliantly blue eyes. It takes some time to discover that he possesses remarkable poetic feeling, the kindest of hearts and a witty tongue. He writes first-rate prose and quite good poetry. As might be expected, he is an acute observer. He says he is a little colour-blind, in as much as he sees red as pink. I think he tries to correct this defect in his pictures—not always with the happiest results. He makes some of his sitters look too rubicund. But I did not say so. It is dangerous to say such things. One usually shares the fate of Gil Blas when he told the Bishop that his sermons were not as good as they were. He got the sack !

15TH (SUNDAY).—Went with L. G. to Rambouillet. We lunched in the fields. He was full of fun and humorous observations about a new hat I was wearing. He described it as the best I ever had and strongly adjured me never to part with it. We walked through the grounds and inspected the tiny *châlet* decorated with shells.

He said, "This sort of thing explains the French Revolution."

I told him of my conversation with Wilson, and said that although obviously a great personage he seems in many ways a simple sort of man—rather provincial.

L. G. : I cannot quite understand him. I am not quite sure whether he is always what he appears to be in private. He always seems to keep on the mask. Now with Clemenceau it is different. Like all public men he has got his public attitude and point of view. He presents in public a certain appearance, but in private you feel that he is not posing, consciously or unconsciously. He is what he appears to be. But I am not sure about Wilson. I am not sure whether he does not carry his public manners into private life, probably unconsciously. For example, when talking to you I am not sure that he did not say to himself, "Well, this is a great newspaper proprietor with a huge circulation behind him. I must make a certain

impression on him." Then he would proceed to say what he thought would make that impression.

This rather amused me. But I still keep my opinion that although the President may be very crafty he has a streak of simplicity.

## Chapter XI

*The Allied Armies prepare to march on Berlin—The Germans agree to the Allies' terms on conditions—Clemenceau prepares the arrangements at Versailles—The signing of the Treaty.*

PARIS : JUNE 18TH AND 19TH, 1919.—Went on a trip with L. G. and party to visit the battlefields near Épernay, Rheims and Verdun. The first day we lunched at Épernay and slept at Bar le Duc. (See accompanying account which I wrote at the time.) The next day we got up early and motored to the Verdun battlefields, where General Valentine gave us a detailed account of the operations. The sun was very hot. It evidently affected L. G.. We lunched in the citadel and then motored to Châlons, where we had tea with General Duport. It was obvious that L. G. did not feel at all well, so I suggested returning by train, which we did. He evidently felt very queer and took with him a small glass of brandy which he sipped after we started. He lay down on the seat and occupied himself with some French newspapers. I dined at the rue Nitot. L. G. picked up and talked with much animation, but overdid it and had to go off to bed.

### THE PRIME MINISTER AT VERDUN

"Foch conceived it ; Gouraud made it possible ; I did it," said General Mangin, when speaking of his great battle on July 18th last year—the first death blow to German hopes. To-day at Pompelle, six miles from Rheims, the Prime Minister saw how Gouraud did his part. Standing on a small chalk hillock, he saw the great slopes on which the German armies were repulsed by the gallant Frenchmen. The world little realises the sacrifices they were called upon to make in these battles. M. Clemenceau tells a touching story of how he was passed by thousands of his countrymen who knew that they were marching to certain death. They were carrying bunches of violets and other flowers which they threw to him as they passed, shouting, "Vive la France ! Vive la France !"

General Gouraud's battle was described by Lieutenant Jean Médard, who at the age of 24, carries on his breast no fewer than seven *croix-de-guerre*, in addition to the coveted palm. Before the war he was a French Protestant divinity student, and hopes shortly to resume his studies in London. The battlefields are covered with bright red poppies and brilliant blue cornflowers. Everywhere Nature seems bent on covering up the horrible ravages of the war.

Later the Prime Minister visited Verdun with its ruined town, huge citadel and ring of forts lying within a radius of five miles or so. He drove along the famous road that saved France and European liberty. Up and down this hilly way every twenty-four hours passed seven thousand motor lorries and other vehicles used for conveying food and ammunition. Almost continuously for six months the road was shelled by the Germans and just as persistently by the French. The Frenchman who drove the Prime Minister remarked, "There ! That is my dug-out ! I used to travel this road twice a day. On two occasions my lorry was hit, but I escaped. Was I wounded ? Yes ! (shrugging his shoulders) but it is nothing !"

At Verdun the operations were described by General Valentine. As far as the eye could reach in every direction one saw every yard of ground churned up by innumerable shells. Devastation and desolation everywhere. But here again the poppies painted the landscape a vivid red, and many of the poor scarred tree stumps were putting out little green shoots. The Prime Minister visited the fort which was temporarily taken by the Germans—a dark gloomy place with long underground tunnels. Here by the electric light the General displayed the dints in the stone made during the desperate fighting which took place in this underground cavern. The tiny little chapel, some twenty feet long by six feet broad, with its domed roof, was specially remarkable. The walls are scored and dented by the grenades and bombs used in the hand-to-hand fighting.

The Prime Minister lunched in the famous citadel, the home of two thousand brave Frenchmen. With its long radiating tunnels it reminds one of an underground railway junction. As the Prime Minister walked into the tunnel in which lunch was served, the band played "God Save the King" and the "Marseillaise." Flowers decked the table and the lunch was excellent, but it was a quiet, thoughtful little party, and Colonel Sarot, the Commandant, and the Prime Minister made frequent references to the latter's previous visit when the battle was raging in 1916. Taking Mr. Lloyd George to another tunnel, Colonel Sarot said, "Here you made your speech. Do you remember that night ?"

After lunch General Valentine made a graceful little speech in which he referred to the comradeship between France and Great Britain and to

the services rendered to France by Mr. Lloyd George. The Prime Minister made a brief but eloquent reply, and then once more we were out again in the sunshine and driving through miles of shattered buildings, which everyone ought to see to appreciate how France has suffered. At Châlons the Prime Minister visited General Duport, the inventor of the famous "seventy-five," who reminded Mr. Lloyd George of the conferences they had attended during the war. Then back to Paris, full of admiration for the tough, virile people who, as Mr. Lloyd George said in his speech, "bore the flag of liberty in the darkest hour."

PARIS : 22ND (SUNDAY).—Everyone waiting expectantly for the German reply to the Allied Note. If before 7 o'clock to-morrow night the Germans do not express their willingness to sign, the Allied armies are to march to Berlin.

L. G. confined to the house with a chill and a touch of the sun. At five o'clock I went to see him. We had tea together. He said, "The Germans have sent in two Notes. I will show them to you. Miss Stevenson shall translate them"—which she did. They were merely Notes notifying change of Government and appointing a new delegate.

L. G. : We have also received secret information to the effect that the Germans are prepared to sign subject to two conditions : 1. That they shall not be held responsible for the war ; and, 2. That they shall not be required to give up the persons mentioned in Clause 227 of the Treaty. We shall agree to no conditions, and unless they are prepared to sign unconditionally at one minute past seven to-morrow night the armies will march forward.

Immediately we had finished tea, a telephone message came from Clemenceau, asking if he might come and see L. G.. A reply being sent in the affirmative, Clemenceau arrived in the course of a few minutes. I went into the adjoining room. Soon a message was sent out asking that President Wilson should be invited to come over, as L. G. was unable to go out. Soon afterwards the President arrived. A little later General Wilson came, and Ian Malcolm also came down from Balfour's flat.

It appeared that Clemenceau had been advised that the German reply had been received at Versailles and was on its

way to Paris. In due course it arrived. L. G. and President Wilson sat on it until 8 o'clock, when they adjourned for dinner, resuming their labours at 9.

By the way, when Clemenceau came in Megan was playing the piano. He went up and patted her on the shoulder, saying, "I thought it was Paderewski!"

Shortly before 8 o'clock L. G. came out to me and said, "The German Note is very much what we thought it would be. We are drawing up our reply. We shall decline to agree to any conditions. The reply will be ready in about an hour and we will then let you have it." I telephoned to London stating the position and saying I would send the formal Notes at 10 o'clock.

While I was having dinner at the Majestic, Sir William Sutherland, one of the Prime Minister's secretaries, brought me the text of the Allied reply and a French translation of the German Note, saying that the English would follow. I dashed to the Astoria, and telephoned the Allied answer to London. Later the English translation of the German Note arrived in dribblets. The last portion, having the pith of the Note, I telephoned to London, sending the full Note by cable, and concluded the whole business by midnight.

PARIS : 23RD.—Early this morning another Note arrived from the Germans asking for 48 hours' further time. The Council met at 9, and replied, declining. At 4.30 in the afternoon news came through from the Villa Majestic that a Note had been received saying that the Germans were willing to sign, but that the Note had not yet been translated. Shortly afterwards this was confirmed by Kerr, who telephoned the news to me. I at once telephoned the information to London—a momentous message, being the first intimation sent that the Treaty was to be signed. Yesterday and to-day I had to do all the telephone business myself.

PARIS : 24TH.—Received letter saying that Council of Four had determined, in consequence of my representations, to visit Versailles to make arrangements for signing the Treaty, and asking me to meet them. Clemenceau in great form. He walked up and down the staircases and corridors as if he were a strong middle-aged man, talking all the time, and giving

a most interesting account of various objects of interest. Wilson, Balfour, and Sonnino, who accompanied us, were much entertained. He showed us where he made his first speech fifty years ago. As we walked through the corridors he made the quaint remark, "In the old days ours (the French) were a dirty nation. They did not wash much, and had disgusting habits." What called forth this observation I did not hear—probably a question by someone about bathrooms.

He is a remarkable person—typical of the true spirit of the French nation, full of energy, resource, and courage, cynical and quick-witted. He gives one a curious feeling of mental and physical activity. He makes one think and act more quickly. I asked him where we should put the photographers. He said, "In the dungeons, where they can work undisturbed!"

I wanted him to fix the hour for signing the Peace for 11 o'clock, so that the correspondents could get their telegrams off in decent time. He said, "No, impossible! The function would last five hours. You must have *déjeuner*. If you fix eleven you will get nothing to eat. It must be two o'clock!"

He said to Wilson, "What about ladies? Are they to come?" Wilson said, "My ladies are naturally very anxious to come, but for that reason I do not express an opinion. It is for you to decide!"

CLEMENCEAU : Oh, then we will leave it to Mr. Balfour!

BALFOUR : Of course if you leave it to me I vote in favour of the ladies!

When it transpired that each of the five great Powers was to be entitled to invite sixty guests, Wilson said to me, "That is a very awkward number. If it were restricted to say ten it would be easy to make a selection, but if one has to select sixty there are certain to be many heart-burnings." I said, "That will have to be risked. Unless we take the places, the French will take them. They will not be left empty."

It was curious to note how, even in this small thing, Wilson showed in his manner the combination of the professor and politician—punctiliousness and craftiness. It is a

strange blend, to which we are not accustomed. We have the politician blended with the scholar—Mr. Gladstone for example ; the politician blended with the lawyer—L. G. and Mr. Asquith for example ; or the politician blended with the business man, like Chamberlain, but we have never yet had the same type as Wilson.

I wanted Clemenceau to make some changes in the seating of the journalists—if possible to place the seats on a slightly raised platform. He said this was impossible, but with great energy and decision gave orders that the seats should be brought further forward, directing the operations with his stick. Balfour asked him whether the table on which the Treaty is to be signed is historic. He said, "No, but it will serve!" He took strong exception, however, to the inkstand, which was of Empire pattern, and gave orders for it to be replaced.

The secretary who came with him said that he drove from Paris to Versailles in eighteen minutes. No speed was too quick for him. He has no nerves. He is always anxious to get from point to point as soon as possible. He does not care for motoring but finds it useful.

PARIS : 26TH.—There is much talk about the sealing and signing of the Treaty. L. G. has no seal. He has ordered one with D. L. G. on it. The rumour is that Sir Joseph Cook, one of the Australian delegation, has ordered a seal bearing a small cross with J. C. under it. Point is given to the story by the fact that he is given to preaching.

Hughes last night arrived from London with a magnificent gold fountain pen. "Are you going to sign the Treaty with that?" asked someone. "Yes," said Hughes. "I bought it for that purpose. I am going to present it to the Commonwealth. It will be put in a museum, and thousands of years hence the people will say, 'That is what that little devil signed the Treaty with!'"

PARIS : 28TH.—The signing of the Peace was a great sight, but from a spectacular point of view badly arranged. The space allotted to the journalists became very much like a bear-garden. The news that the Treaty had been signed was telephoned to London by me and my assistants, two of Reuters'



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men, Turner and Williams. I agreed the time of the signing with the Americans (representatives of the Associated Press) and with the French (representatives of Havas<sup>1</sup>) at 3.12. The message was sent by Turner to Paris and from there to Reuters in London by Williams. The news arrived in London a few minutes after the Treaty was signed. By accident Turner nearly telephoned the wrong time. By his watch the hour was 3.14, but the watch was two minutes fast. Luckily I discovered the error just as he was sending the message. I said, "I have agreed the time with the A.P. and Havas at 3.12." Turner said, "It was 3.14 by my watch." I replied, "Your watch is fast. 3.12 is the time!" All this in a flash. The room was very hot. I opened the windows in the adjoining room, which improved matters but made the architect of the Château very angry. At the beginning the Press were shut off by a line of soldiers. After some trouble, I got these removed, and prevailed upon the journalists to sit down. After the ceremony, Clemenceau, L. G. and Wilson went to see the fountains in the grounds, where they were mobbed by the crowd. They escaped in a motor-car occupied by some Senators who turned out to accommodate them. They were driven to the Hôtel des Reservoirs, where the Germans were staying, and then made their way back on foot to the Château. L. G. said the experience was very unpleasant, particularly as he was feeling none too well. He thought the whole thing badly managed, and that it was disgraceful that people should have been allowed to go up to the Germans in the room where Peace was signed and ask for their autographs. In the evening I dined with the American Press Association. A very pleasant evening. Elmer Roberts in the chair. The Conference has brought about a better understanding between American and British newspaper men, I am glad to say.

And so ends a dramatic six months.

29TH (SUNDAY).—Off home with the P.M., who looks tired and worn. As the train steamed out, he said, "That's over! There is always a sense of sadness in closing a chapter of one's life. It has been a wonderful time. We do not quite

<sup>1</sup> The chief French News Agency.

appreciate the importance and magnitude of the events in which we have been taking part." As the ship steamed out of the harbour at Boulogne, I stood on the deck by his side, as he acknowledged the plaudits of the crowd on the quay. I said, "Now for the next chapter!" "Yes," he replied, "now for the next chapter!" Later he said that the reactionaries were hard at work. "If they imagine," he added, "that I am going to carry out their policy, they are much mistaken. I shall support the cause of the people, and if it becomes necessary to break with these people, I shall do so. Let me have a fortnight's holiday, and then I will decide what to do." The news reached us at Folkestone that the King and Cabinet were to meet L. G. at Victoria. The P.M. changed his clothes in the train. After doing so, he sat wrapped in deep thought. I said, "You will have to make a speech this week."

L. G. : Yes, I do not look forward to it.

R. : There will be plenty to say.

L. G. : The difficulty will be the task of selection. Deciding what and what not to say. It would be easier if I had not to speak first.

The P.M. had a great reception at Victoria, and drove off with the King.

An amusing incident took place when the terms were handed to the Austrians. The Conference was held in a zoological museum. At a critical moment there was a loud crash. Everyone thought a bomb had been thrown. It turned out that a photographer who had been crouching on the top of a huge glass case containing specimens had suddenly disappeared into the interior, whence he was hauled with much difficulty. It was interesting to note that although everyone was alarmed, everyone tried to look calm and unperturbed.

## Chapter XII

*President Wilson's bathroom conference—L. G. and Protection—His feud with Northcliffe—A national testimonial proposed and declined.*

JULY 4TH, 1919.—Called at Downing Street, when L. G. asked me to stay with him at Criccieth, where he goes to-morrow. I congratulated him on his speech describing the Peace Treaty.

10TH.—Called at the War Office to see Winston regarding a meeting at which he proposed to make a statement to the Press on the Russian situation, the newspapers being called together by the N.P.A. in the usual way. He expressed surprise that a Socialist paper had been invited. I said that as it was a member of the Association this followed as a matter of course.

I told Winston I thought the Russian campaign dangerous.<sup>1</sup> He did not like this.

12TH TO 15TH.—To Criccieth, to spend a few days with the P.M..

Much interesting talk. Hankey told me the last German Note arrived early on the Monday morning. He was awakened by Dutasta (Chief Secretary of the Peace Conference) at about 6 a.m.. Together they went to L. G.'s but could make no one hear. Then they went to President Wilson's and succeeded in waking him through the medium of Admiral Grayson, his doctor. A detective was stretched on the mat outside the bedroom door. They had to wake him with great caution as he was armed with a revolver. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson were in bed. The President got out of bed and said, "It is cold here. Come into my bathroom, which is warmer." This they did and Wilson read and discussed the Note seated on the

<sup>1</sup> Peace negotiations between the Allies and the Soviet Government having fallen through in the Spring, the White armies of Kolchak, Denikin and Yudenich, supported by the Allies, were at this time preparing a new offensive.

edge of the bath. They arranged to meet again at 9 o'clock. L. G. asked Hankey what he regarded as the most important meetings in the war. Hankey replied "Those leading up to the Unified Command." L. G. agreed. Hankey said that his most important contribution to the war had been what he did in relation to the submarine campaign.

L. G. : You performed a great service in the matter. You were always urging adoption of the convoy system.

L. G. enquired whether Northcliffe was better. He said, "While he is ill there is a truce so far as I am concerned, but when he recovers he will have to make up his mind what line he intends to take. If he goes on attacking me, I shall have something more to say about him. I don't propose to allow matters to rest. I shall let the public know and fully realise that he is my enemy."

I had to return before I had intended and had no opportunity for a private talk, so I heard nothing more of L. G.'s political plans. Evidently he and Winston must have decided upon some joint action, as W., after his return to London from Criccieth, made a carefully prepared speech, proposing the formation of a Central Party, so called. But I heard no details. We had much talk on the question of Protection. Auckland Geddes, Sir Llewellyn Smith<sup>1</sup> and Horne are expected to-night (the 15th) when the whole matter is to be discussed. L. G. said he was sorry I had to leave, as he would like me to be present at the discussions. Evidently he has no policy. He is examining the question, and feeling his way to a solution. He is impressed by the fact that certain trades may be ruined by the import of cheap foreign commodities, but on the other hand thinks that certain other trades will be ruined if the importation of these commodities is impeded. He instanced the steel trade on the one hand, and the tin plate trade on the other. He said that the steel and iron trades are making a strong effort to secure protection.

22ND.—To lunch at Winston's. Much talk about the coal strike.<sup>2</sup> Winston remarked, "There is bound to be a fight."

<sup>1</sup> Chief Economic Adviser to the Government 1919-27. Director-General of Economic Section, British Delegation, at Peace Conference, 1919.

<sup>2</sup> Declared in Yorkshire to enforce a readjustment of piece rates.

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I said there was much to be urged for the point of view of the working-classes, who had been unfairly treated in the past. Winston said that he was all in favour of good wages and conditions but that the manufacturing and commercial magnate was indispensable and that the fewer and bigger magnates there are, the better for the world. He did his best to justify Rockefeller by economic arguments. If one man has ten millions a year, more wealth is saved than if ten men had one million a year, and so on. I replied that the one man excited more jealousy than the ten men and that civilisation depended upon psychological as well as economic considerations.

WINSTON : Jealousy has always existed and always will. But surely you don't contend that it is a good quality.

R. : No, but under certain circumstances it is understandable. There is a general feeling against the accumulation of too much wealth or power in one hand. The man who has a hard job to make both ends meet on £5 per week not unnaturally resents another man spending £5 per head on a dinner. The old civilisations were broken up by attacks from the outside. It may be that civilisation as we know it will be broken up owing to internal troubles and industrial changes.

WINSTON : That is very likely.

R. : But you, L. G. and company will have to share the responsibility for the new order whether good or bad. You have been busy for years past stirring up the people. Now they are stirred up and demanding the things you told them to demand. Don't forget Samson and the temple.

On Friday last, the 18th, Winston had a nasty smash when flying. He made a speech at the lunch given in honour of General Pershing<sup>1</sup> and went flying in the afternoon. The pilot had his legs broken. Winston's forehead was scratched and his legs were black and blue. In the evening he took the chair at a dinner to Pershing at the House of Commons and made a long speech. This was plucky.

26TH.—Met L. G. at Downing Street. He said, "I am expecting you to-morrow evening. We must not let our Sunday evenings drop. It would be a great pity."

<sup>1</sup> Commander-in-Chief American Expeditionary Forces in Europe, June 1917—September 1919.

27TH (SUNDAY).—Dined with L. G. at his new house at Cobham. He greeted me very warmly, saying, "You will always have a hearty welcome in any house where I am master!"

Sir Bertrand Dawson, the doctor,<sup>1</sup> was there. He had been examining L. G., who said that Sir Bertrand had prescribed a month's rest for him, and that he proposed to go to Criccieth for September. His throat had been troubling him. He asked Sir Bertrand whether it would be well to go to Cobham every night to sleep. Sir Bertrand said, "No! It is far better to rest at Downing Street. The fresh air does not compensate for the strain of travelling backwards and forwards."

L. G. said Foch had a great ovation in the procession yesterday week,<sup>2</sup> and looked the part. L. G. sat next to him at the dinner given to the Allied officers on Sunday evening, at which the Prince of Wales took the chair. L. G. described dramatically how Foch said, swaying about as he sometimes does when he speaks, "Germany is ended! There is no Germany now! There are Germans, but no Germany. It is finished!" L. G. remarked, "I am not quite sure that he is right, but he repeated the statement several times."

L. G. asked Dawson what drug he would select if he were limited to one. Dawson replied, "Opium," without any hesitation, and gave his reasons. L. G. then asked him what drugs he would select if the choice were limited to three. He replied, "That is a more difficult question. A good deal would depend on the part of the world where I had to treat patients. Generally speaking, I should say opium first, quinine second, but the choice of the third is doubtful. Perhaps digitalis, mercury or arsenic." We talked of expectation of life. I referred to the saying, "A man is as old as his arteries," and enquired whether a man with good arteries but with weak powers of resistance against pneumonia and other serious diseases might not have less chances of life than a man with poor arteries but with strong powers of resistance. Dawson

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord Dawson of Penn.

<sup>2</sup> The occasion was the Victory March through London of the Empire's armed forces and representatives of the Allies.

said this might be so. I said, "Then after all it is a question of probabilities." He replied, "Yes ; that is true, but you can judge the one factor and you cannot judge the other."

L. G. told us that he proposed to tour the country in connection with housing. I said, "Are you quite sure about your organisation? Do you think they will deliver the goods?"

He replied, "I have not yet had time to look into that. It was my intention to take the matter up on my return from Cricketh, but the coal strike supervened. That is the trouble. The unexpected is always supervening to occupy one's time and attention."

I said, "It was the same at the Peace Conference."

He said, "Yes ! It is like building a house. You have no sooner started to get out the foundations than a party wall collapses, or the surrounding earth begins to fall in. Before you can proceed with your building operations you have to clear away the debris." He added, laughing, "I am not sure that twelve months of Bolshevism would not be a good thing for this country, so as to clear away a lot of the vested interests which are always stopping progress."

Dawson said, "Yes, but we should lose all our connections, and it is difficult to re-establish order out of chaos."

L. G. : Yes, that is true. But (laughing) it is difficult to move when one is shackled and manacled.

What he referred to, he did not explain.

AUGUST 3RD.—This week-end I thought L. G. seemed quite worn out. It is true he talked with his accustomed vivacity, but underlying it all was a sense of weariness and effort. Also he seemed physically tired, and I noticed that when he got up from a low couch his face flushed up as if the effort were considerable. He has aged greatly during the past six months. He took me aside and told me he was taking a house in Brittany for September. He asked me to accompany him, which I said I would gladly do. He said, "I must have peace and quiet. There is no real peace in this country. I cannot get away from people. There is a fresh crisis every day. Now sometimes we have two in a day."

Hankey was there. Much talk about the Liverpool police strike.<sup>1</sup> L. G. very anxious for news and continually asking Hankey to go to the telephone to enquire of Downing Street. L. G. again referred to his regret at leaving Paris and to the sorrow he felt when he looked out of his window at the rue Nitot and saw President Wilson's house shut up. He said, "Strangely enough I liked Wilson and was more sorry to leave him than I anticipated. He is more likeable than Clemenceau. Clemenceau is hard."

R. : Hard and tough as steel.

HANKEY : I learned to like the old man very much. He is a wonderful person. It was a thing never to be forgotten when he showed us the seat on which he sat fifty years ago before he made his first speech.

L. G. : I said to him, "Who was the President? MacMahon?" Clemenceau replied, "No, a very different man, Grévy. He was a hard, bitter, irreconcilable man." I thought he (Clemenceau) was describing himself.

HANKEY : I was sorry to leave Paris. It was a wonderful experience. One felt that one was taking part in great historic events.

L. G. : I did not feel that, but I enjoyed working with and meeting a number of very remarkable and interesting people. But there ! I should like to flee away and take the Governorship of some small island community—Jamaica for example.

R. : John Wilkes<sup>2</sup> finished up by becoming an officer of the City of London. Why not apply for the post of Recorder or Remembrancer ?

L. G. : Very comfortable jobs !

The conversation then turned on John Wilkes.

R. : Wilkes's letters to his daughter and hers to him are fine specimens of private correspondence.

L. G. : They are delightful. He must have been an attractive man.

HANKEY : Do people now-a-days write letters of that sort ?

<sup>1</sup> Called to enforce recognition of the National Union Officers. The strike was a failure.

<sup>2</sup> 1727-1797 ; City Chamberlain, 1779-97



I have never in my life written a private letter worthy of reproduction.

L. G. : Neither have I. Not a single one.

[He is wrong. I have seen a few of his letters to his uncle, which are well worth reading.]

7TH.—The Lord Mayor<sup>1</sup> rang me up to say that a proposal was on foot to raise a National Fund for the Prime Minister to commemorate his services in the war. The L.M. said he had been interviewed on the subject by prominent people, who wanted him to open a Mansion House Fund. He wanted to know from me whether the P.M. favoured this. He said that while he, the L.M., was quite willing to do anything for L. G., whom he admired very much, he thought that the fund would be a great mistake and tend to injure the P.M.'s position in the country.

The next day I ascertained that the P.M. had been approached and would not take the money under any circumstances. I told the Lord Mayor so, but suggested he should confirm my information.

10TH.—Visited L. G. at Cobham, where I found him with Professor Chapman<sup>2</sup> of the Board of Trade, and Hankey.

We spoke of Haldane.<sup>3</sup>

The P.M. : He is one of the worst-treated men in the country. He did great things before the war. He has received nothing but contumely and ingratitude.

HANKEY : Haldane discovered me.

L. G. : Well, that is another feather in his cap.

HANKEY : When Ottley,<sup>4</sup> my predecessor at the Committee of Imperial Defence, left, I applied. I went to see Haldane, who was smoking the butt end of a cheap German cigar on the end of a penknife. He said, " You are very young for such a post." I replied, " Not so young as you were, Sir, when you

<sup>1</sup> Sir Horace (now Lord) Marshall.

<sup>2</sup> Now Sir Sydney Chapman; Assistant Secretary, Board of Trade, 1918-19; Permanent Secretary, 1920-27.

<sup>3</sup> Viscount Haldane, Secretary for War, 1905-12; Lord Chancellor, 1912-15 and 1924; d. 1928.

<sup>4</sup> Rear-Admiral Sir Charles Ottley, Secretary, Committee of Imperial Defence, 1907-11; d. 1932.

attained a great position at the Bar." I rather scored there. That pleased him. I got the job.

L. G. : I tried to get J. H. Thomas<sup>1</sup> here. We want to find out what the working-classes really want. We meet people who tell us what they think the working-classes want, but the information is usually unreliable and tinged deeply with the personal views of the narrator.

R. : Apart from the general issue, there are three things they want: (1) More wages to compensate for changed money values, (2) Lower prices of essentials, and (3) Houses. Employers will not recognise that £1 to-day will purchase only as much as 9s. 6d. before the war. Is not that correct, Professor Chapman?

PROF. C. : Yes, that is correct.

L. G. : That is very interesting and important.

<sup>1</sup> Now Secretary for the Dominions; General Secretary National Union of Railwaymen, 1918-24 and 1925-31.

## Chapter XIII

*L. G. worn out—His criticisms of the Press—Why the Germans collapsed—The submarine campaign—Eric Geddes talks of resigning.*

AUGUST 14TH, 1919.—The general position is very unsatisfactory. The Government have no grip on the administration. Waste is apparent on all sides, and no attempt is made to put things in order. The truth is that L. G. is worn out and requires a rest. Naturally he is suffering from the reaction of a great effort and a great victory. It also remains to be seen whether he can be an economist. It will be a new rôle.

20TH.—Started for Deauville—quite a merry party. Mr. and Mrs. L. G., Eric Geddes, Sir Hamar<sup>1</sup> and Lady Greenwood and Capt. Ernest Evans.<sup>2</sup> Guest joined us at Southampton. L. G. in good spirits but evidently very tired. At breakfast next morning, much talk about the House of Commons. In the evening much singing. Winston arrived late, having motored from Calais. He looked very weary. He still suffers from the effects of his aeroplane accident. After the rest of the party had gone to bed, L. G. walked up and down the terrace for an hour explaining to me the difficulties in the way of making immediate economies.

22ND.—Long discussion on the Press.

L. G. remarked that the journalists at the Peace Conference had been unreasonable. I did not think it worth while to argue the subject.

L. G. : Newspapers are continually misrepresenting the state of public affairs. They suppress information regarding things that are well done and magnify mistakes which are inevitable in the conduct of life.

R. : The papers are criticising waste with the resulting

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord Greenwood.

<sup>2</sup> One of Mr. Lloyd George's secretaries, now M.P. for the University of Wales.

expenditure of four and a half millions a day. The best reply, and one that would be conclusive, would be to cut down the figure to two millions.

L. G. : There I agree. That is what I said to Bonar Law before I came away.

Later L. G. and Winston related what they described as the best *bon mot* of the war. The War Council were discussing the Italian Fleet, and the Italian Admiral was justifying his action or rather inaction. (The Italian Fleet would not leave the harbour.) General Bliss, the American who was present, left the Conference before it ended. Someone asked him, "What are they doing inside?" He replied, "They are all at sea, except the Italians, who refuse to go to sea under any circumstances whatever!"

23RD.—Kerr arrived from Paris, evidently impressed with the necessity of making concessions to the French in the Eastern Mediterranean. L. G. angry with the French for their attitude concerning Syria. He said that the Syrians would not have the French, and asked how the Allies could compel them to accept mandatories who were distasteful. He added, "I shall have to make a public statement." His attitude to the French has changed greatly since the end of 1918. He continually refers to their greed.

Reference was made to Clemenceau's methods in the Council.

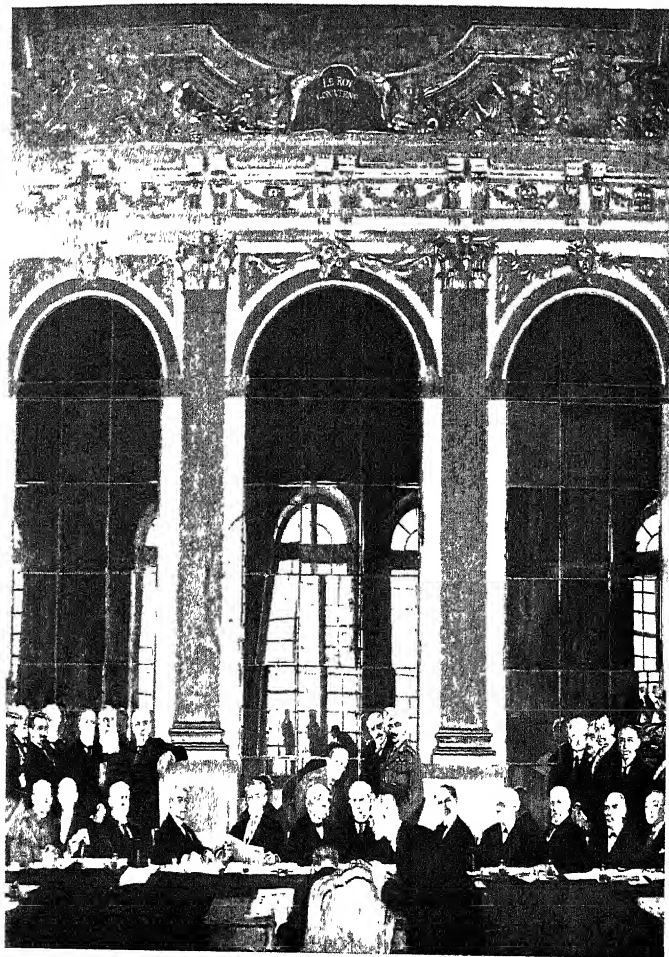
L. G. : When I saw he was going to be nasty, I always went for him as soon as possible. If you butted in like that, the old boy was quite disconcerted.

SOMEONE (laughing) : But that is always your plan, is it not? You always try to ward off an impending attack by an attack of your own.

L. G. (laughing also) : Yes, quite right.

24TH.—Eric Geddes (to L. G.) : Is it your opinion that the failure of the Germans was due in a great measure to the failure of their "Frocks" (politicians)?

L. G. : Yes. At the decisive moment they did not hearten the people and prevent a collapse. Had they done so, the Germans would not have avoided defeat, but they might have held on and thus been able to make better terms.



SIR WILLIAM ORPEN'S PICTURE OF THE SIGNING OF  
PEACE IN THE HALL OF MIRRORS, VERSAILLES,

on June 28th, 1919

(Lord Riddell is the fourth figure from the left in the back row)

R. : Ludendorff says as much in his "Reminiscences" published in *The Times*.

L. G. : That confirms my view. There were occasions when it was necessary for us to put spirit into the people, and I think we succeeded. In March 1918, for instance.

R. : And in April 1917, when the submarine campaign was at its height.<sup>1</sup>

L. G. : We were told that we could not hold out beyond December 1917. Of course that was a very serious statement. I then made up my mind that we should have to make a change at the Admiralty. When I placed Geddes at the Admiralty I told him my views but said he had better study the matter for himself and form his own judgment.

GEDDES : Yes, that is correct. When I had investigated the subject, I agreed that we must have a change, but my courage failed me and I wanted to return to France to deal with transport. I did not like to take the responsibility of parting with Jellicoe and other Admiralty leaders. However, you (P.M.) declined to release me, and so I had to make the plunge. I went to you and told you I thought it necessary that changes should be made, and asked you for your support, which you promised. Bonar Law did the same. I then went to Sandringham and got the King's consent. That was on Christmas Eve. In fact I had my Christmas dinner at Sandringham.

L. G. : I knew in my bones that Jellicoe was tired out, and believed that with fresh measures we could hold on.

Kerr : Do you remember that Smuts made an interesting statement in which he said that there were three important and outstanding events in the war in 1918—(1) Unity of Command, (2) America coming into the war and (3) the change of naval measures ?

L. G. : Yes, I think there is a good deal to be said for that view. Smuts always thought the war would end in a draw.

<sup>1</sup> In reading the passages relating to the Admiralty, reference should be made to the official *Naval History of the War* (Longmans), which contains a detailed and vitally interesting account of the introduction of the convoy system (Vols. 4 and 5, by Sir Henry Newbolt. In particular see Vol. 5, pp. 3 et seq. and p. 202).

KERR : You (P.M.) always believed that we could and must secure a military victory.

L. G. : Yes, I did not think it would be sufficient to win by the blockade. Then the Germans could have said that we beat them by starving their women and children.

GEDDES : Smuts was greatly under Dutch influence. He saw a great deal of the Dutch Ambassador and was in close correspondence—of quite a proper character, of course—with Holland. The Dutch view was that the war would end in a draw. They thought that in the final issue the only two effective factors in the war would be Great Britain and Germany, and that neither would be able to defeat the other. No doubt Smuts took that view.

25TH.—To-day we had an interesting talk about Wilson, Foch and Clemenceau. L. G. thinks Foch will be the great figure of the war in so far as concerns French effort. He believes that Pétain recreated the French Army<sup>1</sup> but that Foch stands head and shoulders above all other generals and will go down to history as the General of the war. L. G. repeated the story of 1918 and again described Foch's methods. I have stated them in my notes before, but L. G. used one phrase that was new. He said Foch continually remarked in French, "I will not give a foot" (of ground), or, "I will not move my foot." This in answer to reiterated demands on all sides that he should take action to defend Paris. L. G. made one curious statement. He said that in 1918, when Foch began to move our reserves, he, L. G., was apprehensive, considering the huge masses of Germans in front of our line. L. G., however, felt that Foch had been appointed Commander-in-Chief and that it would be difficult to interfere. But he wanted to assure himself that Foch was responsible for these plans and that he was *not being influenced by the politicians*. L. G. sent Henry Wilson to see Foch, who assured him that no such influence had been brought to bear. "Thereupon," said L. G., "I raised no objection."

<sup>1</sup> When Pétain was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the French armies in the field in May 1917, he was faced with a grave crisis owing to discontent among the troops. Within a month, thanks to an energetic policy of reform, he was able to report that the Army was completely in hand again.

26TH.—Eric Geddes described his introduction into public life, which does not agree with the P.M.'s account. According to Geddes, Kitchener knew him in India and early in the war brought him to the War Office to help with munitions. Kitchener's proposal was that Geddes should become general manager of Vickers, but that scheme fell through owing to the formation of the Ministry of Munitions. Geddes, who should know best, says that L. G. found him with Kitchener and took him over. L. G.'s account is that Geddes was sent to him by Lord Knarborough, chairman of the North Eastern Railway. Geddes claims to have prepared the transport scheme in the War Book, and to have made the arrangement on behalf of the railways for the Government taking them over during the war. He is only forty-three, and considering that he did not return to England until he was twenty-eight has made wonderful progress. He decries Kitchener. According to him, we should have done far better in the war had K. never been employed. He spoke highly of Haig. He says Haig was not anxious that he (Geddes) should go out to make a report on transport behind the lines, but that when he went Haig gave him every assistance. During the first few days of his visit he was treated as an ordinary visitor, but one evening Haig asked him to go to his room. Then they had a long talk, and Haig gave him an order entitling him to make all enquiries and a thorough investigation. When Geddes returned, L. G. offered to make him Minister of Transport and a member of the Army Council. On the following day an officer arrived from Haig offering him the equivalent position in France. Geddes accepted both offers.

L. G. in bed ill all day. Last night we drove to Caen. Everyone much interested in the cathedral where William the Conqueror was buried. L. G., who is strong on history, knew more about him than the priests who showed us round.

28TH.—More talk about submarine campaign.

L. G. (to Geddes) : I estimate that we lost more than 500,000 tons through delay in adopting the convoy system.

GEDDES : Much more, in my opinion.



L. G. again related how he had had Carson and Jellicoe to breakfast to discuss the adoption of the convoy system. Jellicoe said that tramp captains would never be able to keep in step and that the scheme would be harmful and dangerous. However, he agreed to investigate the possibilities, but the scheme was held up.

One morning we had an amusing scene. After much good-humoured pressure, L. G. and Geddes had their calves and chests measured. L. G.'s calf is 16 inches, Geddes's 17½ ! Geddes much surprised at the size of L. G.'s leg. Before being measured he had offered to bet that his calf was four inches bigger than L. G.'s.

Long talk with Geddes. He said, "Transport is my religion. It interests me more than anything else. Transport contains elements which are not appreciated by the uninitiated. You can tax, and you can give bounties by your transport system. L. G. wants to give all sorts of facilities to agriculture and housing at the expense of the railways. That is all very well from his point of view, but it means that railways and transport are to be penalised for the benefit of agriculture and housing. A fiscal policy is to be introduced by charging high transport rates on certain imported goods and low rates on home manufactured goods. That may be right or wrong as a policy. I don't express any opinion. It does not concern me. My point is that I am to be asked to carry the baby. I am very much disturbed—so much so that last night I wrote my resignation, but this morning I tore it up, as I felt it would be better to wait until I have had time for a week's quiet reflection in the Highlands. As at present advised, I shall resign. I have been offered a good position, but I am willing to sacrifice all that if I can see my way to do my job well, but not otherwise. I don't like public life.

R. : You are a shy man, I should say, although a very forcible one.

GEDDES : You are very observant. I am painfully shy. I am not a politician, and there is a great deal of politics in all this business. I don't care for telling the people what I am doing. I only want to do the job to my own satisfaction. I believe I am a convincing talker on transport—my own subject

—and that I could make really effective speeches in the House of Commons about it, but I have held myself back, as I don't want to become a House of Commons man.

R. : Your resignation would be a severe blow to the Government. You have been held up as a superman in regard to transport, and unprecedented powers have been conferred upon you. If you resign now, your resignation will cause a great sensation.

GEDDES : I think you overstate the effect. Of course I should explain my resignation in a diplomatic way. I don't want to embarrass the P.M..

R. : It does not matter how you explain. The result will be the same.

29TH.—The Astors<sup>1</sup> arrived to-day. After dinner when we were seated round the fire, the P.M. put the question to everyone, "What quality would you prefer to possess?" He chose the power of a great preacher; Greenwood, eloquence; Lady Greenwood, the power to draw the best out of people; Astor, that of a great musician. Mrs. Astor, as usual, was very vivacious. Her husband is a nice fellow, sincerely anxious to do good.

At dinner, in discussing appeals to the public, the P.M. said that no appeal of a purely material character was ever successful with the British people. He referred to Gladstone's career in support of the argument. He said that Mr. G.'s appeal on behalf of Ireland early in his career was a complete success, and that the same remark applied to his campaign regarding the Turkish atrocities; while on the other hand his campaign in 1874 in reference to the Income Tax was a complete failure. No one knew enough of Mr. G.'s history to argue the question.

30TH.—The news arrived that Carnegie<sup>2</sup> had left L. G. £2,000 a year for life. L. G. did not say very much and is evidently awaiting confirmation, the news being contained in a newspaper par.. Of course we all congratulated him.

Mrs. Astor very fierce on the subject of Winston and Russia. She said, "Why not send him to carry on the Russian

<sup>1</sup> Now Viscount Astor and Viscountess Astor, M.P.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Carnegie, the multi-millionaire; d. August 11th, 1919.

campaign ? He could call for volunteers and raise the necessary funds."

I said he might become Tsar. This greatly amused L. G.. Mrs. Astor treated us to dramatic descriptions of how Winston would conduct himself in his new rôle.

Long talk between L. G. and General Bridges, who has been in Russia. The General strongly urges that we should continue to support the anti-Bolsheviks and continue to occupy Armenia. L. G. said this was impossible and that we could not bear the expense. He told the General that the French and Americans will do nothing, although they are loud in their declamations in favour of action. "The poor old British Empire," he said, "is asked to do everything and gets not a word of thanks in return." The General looked disappointed, but had nothing to say in answer.

Earlier in the day L. G. was busily engaged drafting a letter to Winston urging him to cut down the cost of the Army. He showed me the letter and asked whether I thought its terms too strong. I said I saw no reason why he should not dispatch the letter as written. He remarked, "I have said what I feel and what is true. It is very serious. Money is being squandered and I must stop it."

General Bridges said that the League of Nations ought to take charge of the Russian situation and Armenia.

L. G. : They will do nothing of the sort. The League, I am sorry to say, is a failure. One of its main objects was the reduction of armaments, yet what do we find ? America, the protagonist of the League, is about to increase her navy and army to an enormous extent. The League is to apply to every nation but America. The League is not to interfere with American affairs, but America is to have a voice in the affairs of Europe. A strange position !

BRIDGES : It looks to me as if America will soon dominate the world.

L. G. : Well, I am not afraid. That has often been attempted, but the Old World will not have it. So far as I am concerned, I have every confidence in the British people. I believe they will hold their own.

## Chapter XIV

*The Lansdowne letter—L. G. on the crisis of December 1916—  
The appointment of Foch—An after-dinner entertainment at  
Deauville.*

SEPTEMBER 1ST, 1919.—Mrs. Astor said Lord Lansdowne<sup>1</sup> was very ill.

L. G. : He acted with great courage in writing his celebrated letter.<sup>2</sup> I did not agree with him, but it was a plucky thing to do. The result was that he deposed himself from the very influential position he held as leader of the Unionist Party in the House of Lords, and incurred the hostility of a large section of his friends and followers. What is more, before he wrote his letter he circulated a paper to the Cabinet, in which he said what he afterwards repeated in his letter. Asquith, McKenna and others were saying practically the same thing because they were convinced that we could not go on after Christmas, 1917. Lansdowne was the only one who had the courage of his convictions, and I admire the old boy for it. As he made his statement publicly, I feel at liberty to refer to what took place in the Cabinet.

L. G. told us that when he was reading for his preliminary examination as a solicitor, there was no one in the village who could teach him French. So his old uncle got a French dictionary and Guizot's *Life of William the Conqueror*, so that uncle and nephew might study the books together. Guizot however, proved somewhat of a trial to the old uncle, who was a saintly person, as the book opens with an account of William's parentage. His father when crossing a bridge saw a pretty girl. He was so attracted that he took her to his château, and William the Conqueror was the result. "What a remarkable thing," said L. G.. "Had it not been that William's father

<sup>1</sup> d. 1927.

<sup>2</sup>Published in November 1917 with the object of inducing the Allies to state their peace terms, and thus, as he hoped, shortening the war.

and mother crossed the bridge at that particular time, there would have been no William the Conqueror, no Norman Conquest and no George Nathaniel Curzon ! ” This caused much amusement. He also told us that at the end of 1918 and the beginning of this year Lord Milner had become very unwell. L. G. asked Clemenceau to see Milner about some matters. “ No, no ! ” said Clemenceau. “ Not Milner ! If he does not agree with you, he closes his eyes like a lizard, and you can do nothing with him.” (Milner has a habit of half closing his eyes.)

Someone repeated a good story of Carson's (who, by the way, L. G. said casually earlier in the day, might have joined the Government recently had he been so minded, but he preferred to stay at the Bar). A drunken Irishman was cursing the Pope. “ Damn the Pope ! ” he kept on repeating. A passer-by said to him, “ You may not agree with the Pope—I don't agree with him myself—but he is quite a respectable old gentleman, and you should not curse him ! ” “ Well,” answered the drunken man, “ he hasn't got a good name in these parts ! ”

The talk turned on reading and the formation of a library.

L. G. : It is a mistake to purchase a quantity of books just for the sake of possession. One never reads them. Of course that does not apply to books of reference.

R. : The point is that you should endeavour to establish a relationship between yourself and the book. It should become a friend, an acquaintance or even an aversion. I hate those long rows of books which are never opened and which mean nothing more to the owner than so much money and so much wall space.

L. G. : Very true ! Those are my sentiments.

2ND.—L. G. : Haig and Pétain had a working arrangement under which neither would interfere with the other. The appointment of Foch was a bitter pill to Haig, but Foch saved the Allies. Had he been appointed earlier, I doubt if the events of March 1918 would have occurred. Wilson predicted the German attack in the war game which I mentioned at Wilson's dinner at the House of Commons. Robertson would not go to see what he regarded as fooling.

Haig went, but sat reading a paper all the time the exhibition was being given on the large map which had been prepared. It was a most insolent thing to do, and it was not the only time he acted like that. One was in a difficulty. It was impossible to change a commander-in-chief on the eve of a great attack.

L. G. (continuing) : Asquith said a good thing about Bonar Law. He described him as mildly ambitious. That was very good. But my personal experience proves that B. L. is not ambitious as politicians go. He could have been P.M. had he desired.

L. G. then went on to describe the events which led to the formation of his administration. Shortly as follows :

L. G. wrote his first letter on the Friday. Northcliffe found out that a crisis was on, but had nothing to do with it, as L. G. and he were not on speaking terms. Asquith went off to Walmer on the Saturday. Bonham Carter brought him back on the Sunday by convincing him that there really was a crisis. L. G. saw him, and made his proposals for a war committee under a chairman other than the P.M.. L. G. did not suggest himself as chairman. The P.M. was to have a power of veto and initiative. L. G. said A. never initiated anything, so it was quite safe to give him this. The Cabinet also were to have the power of veto. Asquith was prepared to accept this arrangement and promised to write on the Monday confirming. It was understood that L. G. was to be chairman of the committee. That night Mr. A. dined with Montagu and was quite pleased at what had been arranged. Carson told L. G. that he was about to occupy an impossible position and that the committee was certain to fail as it would be under the control of the Cabinet and would be powerless to enforce its decisions. L. G., however, was willing to take the risk. On the Monday, Asquith wrote referring to an article in *The Times*, to which he took objection, but saying that nevertheless, as promised, he defined the proposals discussed at the interview. Later Mr. A. saw McKenna, who advised him to withdraw from the arrangement, which he did. L. G. tried to see him, but Mr. A. avoided him all that day. Consequently L. G. wrote resigning and saying that Mr. A.'s conduct regarding

the arrangement was on a par with his treatment of other vital questions concerning the war, instances of which he gave : —decisions arrived at and then changed ; a continual policy of shilly-shally and uncertainty. Asquith then saw the King, and advised him to send for Bonar Law. L. G. and Carson both urged Bonar Law to form a Government, and L. G. said he would serve in any capacity. Bonar Law, however, declined. The proposal was then made that a Coalition should be formed under Bonar Law. L. G. said, "We were all willing to serve but Asquith. He came to Buckingham Palace and said, 'If it is proposed that I, who have been at the head of affairs for eight years, should occupy a subordinate position, I could not agree to do so.' He looked at Henderson<sup>1</sup> as much as to say, 'I am sure you will agree with that.'"

Henderson, who, according to L. G. acted very well, expressed his willingness to serve. As this proposal broke down, Bonar Law advised the King to send for L. G.. Asquith was certain that L. G. could not form a Government. Henderson advised L. G. to see the Labour Party. They came to the War Office. L. G. said, "I made the speech of my life and won them over. J. H. Thomas acted well. I saw they were not pleased with Sidney Webb, so I began to quarrel with him right away. That was very useful. Looking back, although it is a difficult thing for me to say, I really don't think we could have won the war under Mr. Asquith. Whether we should have lost it, I don't know. I don't believe he would have had the courage to get Jellicoe to resign. I don't think he would have dealt satisfactorily with the Italian collapse. I am entitled to say that, in January 1917, I foresaw and wrote regarding the necessity for preparing to dispatch troops to help the Italians. Consequently, when the occasion arose, our plans were made. I am certain that Mr. A. would not have insisted upon the unified command, for which I paved the way by appointing Foch as head of the reserve army, which was strongly opposed by Haig.

3RD.—L. G. : When I was a boy, the thought of Heaven used to frighten me more than the thought of Hell. I pictured Heaven as a place where there would be perpetual Sundays with perpetual services, from which there would be no escape,

<sup>1</sup>The Rt. Hon. Arthur Henderson, the Labour leader.

as the Almighty, assisted by cohorts of angels, would always be on the look-out for those who did not attend. It was a horrible nightmare. The conventional Heaven with its angels perpetually singing, etc., nearly drove me mad in my youth and made me an atheist for ten years. My opinion is that we shall be reincarnated and that hereafter we shall suffer or benefit in accordance with what we have done in this world. For example, the employer who sweats his workpeople will be condemned to be sweated himself in perpetuity.

6TH AND 7TH.—Balfour, Auckland Geddes, Horne and Kerr joined the party. A very pleasant time. To-day (Sunday 7th) we lunched at Dives-sur-Mer. A. J. B. looking well and in great form. He said that during the whole of his seventy-two years he had never spent such an eccentric evening as yesterday evening. Not a bad description. The entertainment consisted of dancing (A. J. B. himself danced a little in a Scottish reel), an impromptu Apache dance by Mrs. Astor and Evans, followed by a performance in which the former donned the face-mask of President Lincoln (presented to L. G. by a man who has been painting his portrait) and my wide-awake hat. Thus adorned she was led into the room by Evans. Sir Hamar Greenwood gave an exhibition of step-dancing to the tune of "Solomon Levi." Auckland Geddes delivered with much unction some quaint Scottish sermons. The best of these was one in which a preacher, after describing with dramatic detail the agonies of the damned "on the floor of the bottomless pit," remarked, "As an excuse to the Almighty, they will say, 'O Lord, we didna' ken!' And the Lord will answer out of His infinite mercy, 'Well, ye ken noo!'"

The whole party sang with more or less discord a number of popular songs. One item in the programme consisted of half the company trying to sing the other half down, one section singing "Tipperary," and the other "Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag." L. G. and A. J. B. joined in the contest with much vigour. Mrs. A. and Evans also gave an imitation of a village clergyman and his wife making a presentation. All most amusing. Mr. B. very appreciative, but evidently astonished.



The conversation turned on Bonar Law. Someone said that B. L. hated music. "Yes," said A. J. B., "so much so that if he were a dog he would howl."

7TH.—L. G. told me that A. J. B. had complimented him to-day on his administration, and said that he, A. J. B., had recently warned some of his Unionist colleagues that they could not hope to form a Government that would last a month, and that L. G. was the only man capable of leading a coalition. "B. has always been very kind to me," said L. G. "I like him and am glad to see him looking so well. The younger Conservatives are with me, and as soon as I can get things a bit more clear I shall be able to get on without greedy people who see the knife at their throats and know I am not in sympathy with them."

8TH.—Long talk with Auckland Geddes, who evidently hankers after a political career in England, but is troubled by the bill of costs. He is clever and ambitious. A remarkable man in many ways.

We talked of Horne,<sup>1</sup> who is very popular—one of the successes of the Ministry. He has plenty of shrewd common-sense. I have all along backed his claims, ever since I met him as a secretary to Turner, one of Neville Chamberlain's assistants. I think Horne may go far. He has great powers of work, in addition to which he is a good speaker.

<sup>1</sup> Minister of Labour.

## Chapter XV

*Bonar Law's two stories—L. G. plans a new party—Bonar Law's misgivings—The great railway strike.*

SEPTEMBER 9TH and 10TH, 1919.—Arrival of Bonar Law and his daughter. His loyalty to L. G. is remarkable. The Syrian question was under discussion. "I am sure," remarked B. L., "that *you* (L. G.) could settle it with Clemenceau." This was said with a tone of conviction.

Lord Allenby<sup>1</sup> and General Shea arrived this evening to discuss the Syrian question. Lord A. is an impressive-looking man, with eyes showing great force of character—eyes which normally are partially obscured by his upper eyelids, but which blaze out when his feelings are aroused. He has not much power of expression, but gives the impression of being a practical sort of man, greatly devoted to duty. After dinner both evenings the party engaged in the usual dancing and singing. This was going on while a conference was being held in the next room between Allenby, L. G., Bonar Law, Hankey and Shea.

Mrs. Astor remarked as Allenby was leaving for his hotel on the first night, "Field Marshal, don't let the P.M. wangle you into staying if you don't want to. Be firm and say 'NO!'" Lord A. gave her a steely look and replied in an acid tone, "There is no one to whom I would not say 'No' if I thought it necessary."

Lord A. gave an interesting account of his campaigns in France and Palestine—mostly technical. "We did this. They did that. We moved our guns here. They moved theirs elsewhere," and so on.

A constant topic of conversation during this trip has been the relative merits of the politician and the soldier.

This is one of L. G.'s observations :

The common law of England is in many respects very

<sup>1</sup>High Commissioner for Egypt, 1919-25.

sensible. The jury is a good tribunal on the whole. They hear the evidence, and the butcher, baker and greengrocer come to a decision which is usually correct. The British Constitution adopts the same plan. The politicians hear what the experts have to say, and then like the jury, they decide. Experts are usually narrow and often cranky.

10TH.—Long talks with Bonar Law and Guest regarding L. G.'s proposals to form a new party consisting of the Conservatives, a section of the Liberals and the Lloyd Georgeites. The suggestion is that the organisations should be amalgamated. Guest said he saw great difficulties as he did not believe that the Tories would be prepared to hand over their machine and trust themselves to L. G.. Guest is a shrewd sort of man. He added that the proposal was to give the party a new name—"National Democratic," he thought. Evidently Guest is not keen or sanguine.

Bonar Law told me that he thought it very doubtful whether the Conservatives would be willing to hand themselves over body and soul to L. G.. He said they were quite prepared to go with him step by step, but he did not believe they would agree to scrap their party organisation and give up their powers of defence and offence should he propose something with which they totally disagreed.

Bonar Law told me two good stories.

A deputation came to Downing Street, carrying a banner bearing the inscription, "God will see right done!" B. L.'s Roman Catholic governess remarked, "That banner is no good. They don't know God in this street!"

The other story was about Joe Chamberlain. He was at lunch when one of the minor officials of the Government, a conceited sort of person, unduly monopolised the conversation. Joe said to him, "What office are you holding now?" "So and So" (mentioning an under-secretaryship) was the response. "Ah," said Joe in frigid tones, "I must get a list of the minor officials in the Government."

12TH.—Our stay at Deauville came to an end. A tragic incident took place during the visit. The villa taken by L. G. was the property of a French lady whose son had been convicted as a German spy and condemned to be shot. With her

daughter she came to the villa and asked to see L. G. with a view to getting him to intercede with Clemenceau. Of course L. G. could not see her and, as someone had to do so, Sir Hamar Greenwood and I had the unpleasant task of explaining that the British Prime Minister could not intervene. She was a most impressive-looking woman, dressed in mourning. She made an eloquent appeal for her son, and wept bitterly as Greenwood and I escorted her to her motor car. The son was shot the next morning.

We all drove to Evreux, where we lunched—a very pleasant party—L. G., Balfour, Bonar Law, Auckland Geddes, Horne, Hankey, Captain Evans, Miss Stevenson, Miss Bonar Law and others. Much amusing conversation. I drove from Deauville to Evreux with L. G.. We talked about the political situation. L. G. said he thought the time had come for him to strike out on his own account, and that the present situation was very artificial. He said, "Then those who are for me will declare themselves, and those who are against me will do the same. Then I shall know where I am."

I said I thought there was a good deal to be said for this, but that it might be difficult to give effect to his intentions. The question was how to go about it. We parted at Evreux, all feeling rather sad at the termination of a very pleasant holiday. Auckland Geddes, Horne, Miss Stevenson and I drove to Havre, where we arrived after many adventures through missing the way. Geddes is a delightful man—very kind and improves greatly on acquaintance. At Rouen we visited the cathedral.

20TH.—Drove with L. G. to Cobham. I met him at his dentist's. He screwed up his face and said he had had a horrible time, but it was always pleasant to feel that an unpleasant job was over.

L. G. thinks a speaking campaign in the country most important, so that people may know what has been and is being done. He complained that very few of the Ministers make speeches and that the burden of exposition and stimulation is left almost exclusively to him. He said, "The Ministers say they have not sufficient time, but look what I have to do, and yet I make speeches."

I said it seemed necessary to reconstruct the Cabinet somewhat on pre-war lines, so as to ensure collective responsibility and collective action.

He did not say much in answer to this.

We talked of the future of political parties. He referred to Haldane's speech in which it was suggested that in future the House of Commons would resolve itself into groups. I said I thought that gradually two great parties would form themselves—one a party with a forward policy, and the other a Labour Party with an even more advanced policy. To a certain extent it would be a fight between the "haves" and "have-nots," and although the "haves" would include a good many "have-nots" in the shape of hangers-on and persons temperamentally opposed to working-class views, the "have-nots" would include a good many "haves" temperamentally opposed to the existing order.

L. G. : I think you are right, but I shall not be for the "haves" or the "have-nots." My policy is to endeavour to hold an even balance between the two. I intend to advocate reforms which will remove gross inequalities and grave abuses. On the other hand, I am convinced that the world cannot be carried on without the aid of the skilled managerial class. You must have leaders and captains of industry if you are to have any progress. You cannot have adequate production unless you invoke the aid of the clever manufacturers and business men working for their own profit. But you must see that they do not get too much and that they do not grind the other classes under their heel.

L. G. (speaking of a man proposed for some high departmental position) : What people do not understand is that, in a democratic country, the head of a department must not only be a good administrator—he must also be a good speaker and expositor. He must be able to defend the Department.

21ST (SUNDAY).—Dined with L. G. at Cobham as usual. We talked a good deal about the labour situation. I said that the struggle would come when prices fell and the employers wished to reduce wages. L. G. agreed and said he thought it would be difficult to reduce them.

24TH.—Brade<sup>1</sup> dined with me. He is better, but still very shaky. He thinks of retiring at the end of the year, as he finds the War Office too trying. He says there is a perpetual wrangle between the civilians and soldiers. The demobilisation has, of course, been a gigantic task, but the delays have been serious.

28TH.—The great railway strike is in full blast.<sup>2</sup> Dined with L. G. at Cobham. Present, Eric and Auckland Geddes and others. L. G. seemed worried, as well he might. He said that the men had acted badly in breaking off the negotiations suddenly and prematurely. The country was against them, and they were sure to be beaten.

The party broke up at 10, when the Geddes brothers returned to their offices to resume the organisation of anti-strike measures.

<sup>1</sup> Secretary, War Office, 1914-20; d. 1933.

<sup>2</sup> It began on Sept. 26th and ended on Oct. 5th. The main issue was the establishment of a universal standard wage for each grade of railway worker. The Unions claimed that every worker in a given grade, irrespective of the line on which he worked, should receive a rate equal to the wage paid before the war to the highest paid worker in that grade on any railway, plus 33s. a week war advance. The chief point in the settlement was that the Government guaranteed the maintenance of war wages, independent of the cost of living, for an extra 12 months.

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24TH.—Brade<sup>1</sup> dined with me. He is better, but still very shaky. He thinks of retiring at the end of the year, as he finds the War Office too trying. He says there is a perpetual wrangle between the civilians and soldiers. The demobilisation has, of course, been a gigantic task, but the delays have been serious.

28TH.—The great railway strike is in full blast.<sup>2</sup> Dined with L. G. at Cobham. Present, Eric and Auckland Geddes and others. L. G. seemed worried, as well he might. He said that the men had acted badly in breaking off the negotiations suddenly and prematurely. The country was against them, and they were sure to be beaten.

The party broke up at 10, when the Geddes brothers returned to their offices to resume the organisation of anti-strike measures.

<sup>1</sup> Secretary, War Office, 1914-20; d. 1933.

<sup>2</sup> It began on Sept. 26th and ended on Oct. 5th. The main issue was the establishment of a universal standard wage for each grade of railway worker. The Unions claimed that every worker in a given grade, irrespective of the line on which he worked, should receive a rate equal to the wage paid before the war to the highest paid worker in that grade on any railway, plus 33s. a week war advance. The chief point in the settlement was that the Government guaranteed the maintenance of war wages, independent of the cost of living, for an extra 18 months.



have agreed not to strike until September 1920. That breaks up the Triple Alliance. The strike came too soon for the colliers and transport workers. They were not ready. Now we have detached the railway men. I think the result of the strike will have a most salutary influence."

11TH.—Golfed with L. G.. We talked of novels. He said he had read *The Cloister and the Hearth* six or eight times when a youth. *Kidnapped* was another favourite, also *The Three Musketeers* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*. His favourite character in fiction is in *Kidnapped*. We spoke of his speech at the Mansion House on Tuesday regarding the lessons of the strike. He said he did not deliver the speech he had prepared, but spoke extempore from notes made in the room. His prepared speech had not met with the approval of his secretaries, and, although annoyed at their criticism, he acted on their opinion. L. G. told me that he had stood alone in urging a settlement. All those acting with him were anxious to defeat and punish the strikers. He, however, thought this a mistake and that the result of such a policy would be an aftermath of hatred and dissatisfaction which would be most prejudicial to the country. He was glad he was not at Downing Street on the Saturday when the men came to see the Government. Fresh air and exercise help to calm the mind and to give one the right point of view. On Saturday he sat about in the garden, and on Sunday, when he saw the deputation, he was able to look at matters in a reasonable way.

(Hartshorn<sup>1</sup> tells me that the Trade Unionists who went to Downing Street say that Bonar Law was far more conciliatory than L. G.)

The Rusholme election will be instructive. The result is to be declared on the 20th. Labour ought to be the real Opposition. The Wee Frees<sup>2</sup> represent nothing. They are more reactionary than the Conservatives.

L. G. and I spoke of the miners' claim to nationalisation. L. G. described their real object as being the appropriation of

<sup>1</sup>Later the Rt. Hon. Vernon Hartshorn; President South Wales Miners' Federation; d. 1931.

<sup>2</sup>The small remnant of Independent Liberals who emerged from the "Coupon" election of 1918.

the mines for their own benefit, and referred to statements made by Hodges,<sup>1</sup> one of their leaders. "It is not nationalisation that they really want," said L. G., "it is 'guildism' or syndicalism."

I described my interview this week with Hartshorn, who told me that the miners are bent on nationalisation and that it is a religion with them. It is difficult to argue about a religion. A Scottish Colonel who had commanded a miners' regiment during the war also described his men's belief in nationalisation as a religion.

"Look here," said L. G. after dinner. "If you were Prime Minister and you had to make a big speech this week, what would you say?"

R. (laughing) : Luckily I am not Prime Minister. If I were I think I should point to the financial position of the country and the necessity for united effort by all classes. I should indicate the necessity for economy, not only political but individual. I should also emphasise the importance of reviving Parliament, the Cabinet, political meetings, and all the ordinary paraphernalia of our public life.

L. G. : That is not so bad. I have thought of saying several different things. One thing I thought of saying was that the Press and public must stop nagging at men holding high positions. If it goes on, I can't keep some of the most useful Ministers. Eric Geddes is going. He says he can't and won't stand it.

R. : When at Deauville I told you he was on the point of going, but you would not believe me. I doubt the advisability of doing what you suggest. Why challenge the Press to justify their action? You are sure to have criticism. You will only intensify it.

L. G. : There is perhaps a good deal in what you say.

R. : The best reply is efficient administration. The public are bent on economy, and quite rightly. Let the Government show a substantial reduction in their expenditure. In my opinion four things are essential : (1) the revival of public interest in Parliament, coupled with a revival of Parliamentary

<sup>1</sup>Frank Hodges, General Secretary, Miners' Federation of Great Britain, 1918-24.

power and influence ; (2) the revival of the Cabinet system with collective responsibility and proper team work ; (3) the revival of public meetings throughout the country ; (4) more economical administration.

L. G. did not say much in reply, but he did not object.

16TH AND 17TH.—At Sheffield with L. G. and Mrs. L. G.. I noticed he spoke on the lines of our conversation on Sunday, but I was not satisfied with his financial speech. He was all on the defensive and gave no sure and certain indication of adequate steps to ensure a diminution of Government expenditure.

18TH.—Golfed with L. G. and Guest at St. George's Hill. L. G. very full of the books of Vicente Blasco Ibañez, the Spanish novelist who wrote *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*. He gave a vivid account of the feelings of a matador before entering the ring, as described by this author—his terror and desire to escape the ordeal.

L. G. : I sympathise with him. That is how I feel before I make a speech. But I am like the matador when I get in the ring. My nervousness goes. I pull myself together. The House of Commons is a terrible animal to face. I have seen men cowed by it.

Guest told me that L. G. had practically agreed to make a statement in Parliament, when it opens, as to the formation of a Cabinet. Guest discussed the matter with him yesterday for an hour and to-day for another hour.

L. G. says he thinks the workers are more settled than they were. The negotiations with the railway men have been resumed. They presented their case in writing, which L. G. described as wise. He told them he could not give them an immediate reply, as he was going to Sheffield. Neither Thomas nor Cramp, the men's leaders, raised any objection.

We talked of Lord Fisher's Memoirs. L. G. said he thought it deplorable that such a clever man should tarnish his reputation by producing such a book. There are clever things in it, but it proves that the old man is not what he was. I referred to the chapter regarding army re-organisation, which I said contained some sagacious sayings. I, however, doubted Fisher's estimation of Sir John French as an able selector of men. Guest said that French had been much maligned. He

wished to appoint Henry Wilson as his Chief of Staff, but Asquith would not hear of it. Guest went to see him on French's behalf. Asquith snapped out, "No ! I will never agree to Wilson's appointment ! " Guest replied, " You are making a great mistake, Sir, and I fear you are allowing politics to affect the decision." However, Mr. A. would not agree. Sir William Robertson did not wish to become Chief of Staff. He said he did not understand the duties. It was not his job. He understood supply, but strategy had not been his business. French had to beg him to take the job, which he accepted much against his will, and with unfortunate results.

19TH.—To dinner with L. G. as usual (Sunday). Lord Lee<sup>1</sup> was there.

It appears that von Donop<sup>2</sup> has written a paper in which in effect he claims to have made arrangements for providing all guns and ammunition required. L. G. had sent this paper to Lee for examination, Lee having been at the Ministry of Munitions<sup>3</sup> in the early days. Lee described the paper as being extraordinary.

When Lee had gone, L. G. spoke of Northcliffe thus :

L. G. : I must let the public know that there is a personal feud which is the reason for Northcliffe's continuous attacks. Then the public will learn how much importance to attach to them (laughing heartily). I think I am entitled to enjoy myself a little. I always used to be attacking somebody. Lately I have had to live the life of a recluse. I can never attack anybody but people are always attacking me. I don't mind attacks if I can reply. I hate having to suffer in silence.

Mrs. L. G. : Quite right. I don't believe in taking attacks and abuse in a resigned, humble way.

Before Lee departed we talked of Alfred Mond<sup>4</sup> and his coming libel cases arising out of the election. The defendant is David Davies, a Swansea journalist, and an old friend of

<sup>1</sup>Now Viscount Lee of Fareham ; Minister of Agriculture, August 1919–February 1921.

<sup>2</sup>Major-Gen. Sir Stanley von Donop, Master General of the Ordnance, 1913–16.

<sup>3</sup>As Parliamentary Military Secretary, 1915–16.

<sup>4</sup>Later Lord Melchett ; d. 1930.

L. G. and myself, who stood against Mond at the last election. L. G. told a good story. Mond described David Davies as resembling Judas Iscariot. Davies retorted that Judas Iscariot was not a Welshman !

From what I can hear, Lee is doing well. L. G. says he hears the same thing. The department is quite changed. Lee and I both told L. G. that the Woods & Forests Department sadly requires re-organisation, and that the Forests should be placed under the Board of Agriculture and the Town Properties under the Office of Works.

26TH.—To Cobham to dine with L. G. as usual (Sunday). The new Viscount and Viscountess Astor were there.

Much conversation regarding Astor's power to give up the title, which he said was distasteful and contrary to his principles. Lady A. dwelt upon the hardships and injustices involved in being compelled to accept the peerage. She is to stand for Plymouth in succession to her husband. I think she will get in. She is convinced that she will. She made facetious comments on the dress she would wear in the House of Commons. "Something quiet. A coat and skirt. In the evening no evening dress. Only a V with a piece of chiffon. Of course I should wear a few pearls."

The Missouri Waltz was played on the piano and Lady A., who has remarkable dramatic gifts, showed us how she might dance up the floor of the House of Commons and make her bow to the Speaker. Very graceful and amusing.

L. G. was quiet and thoughtful. I think the crisis over the Pilotage Bill<sup>1</sup> is giving him reason for much consideration. I have not seen him so pensive for some time.

L. G. : The world is very sordid. Fifty years hence, when the people of those days look back on these times, they will be appalled at the social conditions under which we are living. As I walked through a factory the other day, I thought how dark and gloomy it all was and that even the sunshine was shut out by the smoke.

<sup>1</sup>The Government had just been defeated by a majority of 72 votes on a clause of the Aliens Bill permitting a few French pilots to hold certificates for certain British ports. They carried their point a few days later, however, at the expense of granting concessions on other clauses of the Bill.

R. : I am the last person to underrate the evils of the industrial system, but don't let us forget that there is another side to the lives of the workmen. They possess a fund of humour and philosophy and they have their games, amusements and social life. Earthquakes never made anything. The condition of the people can be best improved by quiet, patient progress. By doing things and not by talking of them.

[I might have said that the non-dramatic changes have done most for the people, to wit, the trade union movement. Houses are the chief need. See a most instructive report prepared by a man sent on my suggestion by the Labour Department to interview the editors of all the leading provincial papers to obtain their opinion on labour conditions in the provinces. Everywhere the cry is for houses. As a matter of fact, the housing schemes are in a very backward way.]

L. G. spoke of his interview with Alfonso, King of Spain, who discussed the railway strike with him. Alfonso said he had settled a railway strike in Spain by mobilising the railway men as soldiers and calling out the military. "That stopped it!" said the King.

L. G. (to us) : That is just what the Kaiser said to me at the time I settled the first railway strike. He told me how he had settled a similar strike in Germany. "I called up the men," said he, and then he winked at me, as much as to say, "That did them, my boy!" If Alfonso does not take care, he will go the same way as the Kaiser.

26TH.—The conversation turned on Lady Astor's candidature. I said, "What line are you (Lady A.) going to take regarding temperance and prohibition?"

(She is a prohibitionist and had been speaking of the evils of drink and the need for prohibition in the interests of women and children.)

The P.M. (looking very amused) : You will have to be careful what you say about drink.

R. : If you are a teetotaller you can say so. That will appeal to all teetotallers.

The P.M. : At elections you cannot always have the best. You must moderate your transports sometimes.

31ST.—A long interview with Lord Inverforth<sup>1</sup> who told me he was so disgusted with the treatment he was receiving from the W.O. and Air Force that he had written to L. G. expressing his intention to resign and saying that if a Ministry of Supply were formed he would be willing to devote two hours a day to advisory work. He had suggested that Kellaway<sup>2</sup> should be appointed Minister. He told me that the W.O. and Air Force would not relinquish things in their possession so that they might be sold or utilised. Spare motor parts, furniture etc., were badly wanted but were held up in large quantities. An M.P. had seen him only last week and complained that while in his constituency there was a great dearth of furniture, blankets, etc., large quantities were being held up at the local military depot. Inverforth could not prevail upon the W.O. to give up these things. He said he was sick and tired and could no longer put up with these unbusinesslike proceedings.

He said that the Slough depot would make a profit of four million pounds for the year and that his position would be fully justified by the results. He also said that he should make a hundred millions profit out of wool, I think he said eighty millions out of jute, and large profits out of other commodities.

<sup>1</sup> Minister of Munitions, Jan. 1919—March 1921.

<sup>2</sup> Later the Rt. Hon. F. G. Kellaway; Joint Parly. Secretary, Ministry of Munitions, 1916; d. 1933.

## Chapter XVII

*An Economy debate—The art of receiving deputations—"Pussy-foot" Johnson—The state of the Police Force—President Wilson's mistake—Conditions in Ireland.*

NOVEMBER 1ST, 1919.—Took the chair at the Readers' Pension Dinner. Auckland Geddes and Lord Russell of Liverpool<sup>1</sup> came, the latter being complimentary about my work for the Press.

Geddes made a strong attack on the Press for inaccuracy and went so far as to say that there is no paper to which one could turn for a true account of the doings of the world.

When I came to speak, I said that newspapers were at any rate as accurate as politicians, and that so far as the bread and butter work of the Press was concerned it is a marvel of accuracy.

2ND (SUNDAY).—Dined with L. G. at Cobham. He seemed rather perturbed at the victory of the Labour people at the Borough Council elections, but added with his usual optimism, "Their victory will ruin them. They will at once begin raising wages and go in for all sorts of foolish schemes. That will disgust the country."

We talked of modern oratory. I said, "The old-fashioned type of speech has lost its popularity. People want vivid patches."

L. G. : I quite agree. You must say something that attracts attention—something with lift in it—dull statements and arguments don't attract. You must be vivid, although there are occasions on which you must make a plain, simple argumentative statement. I myself speak best without notes. My notes always sit upon me like a heavy burden. When I spoke in the House of Commons last week it was like going back to the old days. It is a wonderful stimulus to hear the cheers and counter-cheers and to be able to say the things that come into one's mind at the moment.

<sup>1</sup>d. 1920.



R. : Apart from your speech the division was the most notable event of the Economy debate. It showed that there is and must be a strong line of cleavage between Labour on the one hand and the capitalist and middle-classes on the other. The Liberals stand for nothing. In fact they are more conservative than a large section of the Unionists.

L. G. : Quite true. The same thing occurred to me. The abstention of the Liberals from the division was the most notable event in the history of the country. Many of the young Conservatives, particularly the young officers who have returned from the Front, are most democratic in their views and anxious for reform. The so-called Liberal Party consists mostly of plutocrats who have no sympathy whatever with the aspirations of the mass of the people. Did you read Asquith, and what did you think of it ?

R. : I thought it a poor performance. Naturally he is most anxious that the Liberal Party should be kept on foot, but does not indicate what it now represents.

L. G. said that Henderson had made a pretty good speech, but that Clynes<sup>1</sup> had made the best.

I told L. G. that I had seen Inverforth and that he was angry and disgusted at the treatment he was receiving from the W.O.. L. G. seemed much annoyed and gave instructions to Evans, one of the secretaries, to take the matter up at once.

9TH.—Dined with L. G. at Cobham. Sir James Carmichael,<sup>2</sup> who is looking after housing, was also there for a time. Earlier in the day I played golf with Seely,<sup>3</sup> who said that unless the Prime Minister would agree to make the Air Ministry a separate Department he would have to resign, that the matter was being dealt with to-morrow at noon and that probably he would announce his resignation to-morrow afternoon, as he felt sure that L. G. had made up his mind not to agree to his requirements.

I told L. G. that I thought Seely intended to resign if he did not get his way. L. G. said he would be sorry but there

<sup>1</sup>The Rt. Hon. J. R. Clynes, Food Controller, 1918-19.

<sup>2</sup>Director-General of Housing in England and Wales, 1918-20.

<sup>3</sup>Now Lord Mottistone; Under Secretary for Air and President of Air Council, Jan.-Nov. 1919.

was no alternative. The creation of a new department would no doubt mean more expenditure which could not be faced. He was strongly in favour of a Ministry of Defence to be responsible for the Army, Navy and Air Force. If this plan were adopted the efforts of the three services would be co-ordinated and they would not be competing against each other. He said he thought there would not be another big war, at any rate for ten years, and that meanwhile we could consolidate our position. He made some facetious remarks about Ministers, generals, etc.. He thought men should be marked like a motor lorry, "To carry 2 tons, 3 tons, 10 tons" and so on. There are many men who can undertake a certain amount of responsibility and perform their duties well, but they do not know their limitations. When they get a heavier job it is too much for them.

R. : The trouble is that the capacity of motor lorries is a fixed quantity. You can never tell what a man can do until he tries, although very often you have a pretty good idea of his limitations.

We talked of the dinner at the Guildhall last night.

L. G. (laughing) : My bit of pheasant was not eatable. It was so hard. Good material for building houses, Sir James ! I can guarantee that it would have been firm and durable. I made my dinner off the cold roast beef, and very good it was. I have not had such good beef for years.

We talked of the speeches.

L. G. : I thought that Winston was going to be good, but he was not. I was lost in admiration of Walter Long. The old boy made a most excellent speech—nothing but platitudes, but he said them in the right way, although I am bound to confess that when he had finished, I could not tell exactly what he had said. The art of platitude is a great art. He spoke very much like the chairman of a company at the annual meeting. He made all the proper references. He spoke of the admirable services rendered by our most excellent Secretary, and made suitable reference to the indefatigable labours of our Managing Director ! He also said the right thing about his colleagues.

R. : He understands Parliamentary life. When most Ministers receive a deputation they wait until the deputation

has assembled. Then they enter in state followed by their satellites, take the chair, and make a bow. Not so Walter Long. He is there five minutes beforehand and has a nice word of welcome for each of the members of the deputation as he arrives. The result is that he starts the proceedings having made friends with everybody.

L. G. : Yes. That accounts for the statement made at a deputation I had the other day, when the Labour members said they had been received in the most courteous and sympathetic manner at the Admiralty. Long has the art of dealing with Parliamentary points. He thanks the member for having called his attention to the matter and for the valuable information he has afforded, which will receive the most careful consideration of the Department. But he ends up by saying that at the moment it is impossible to take any action. The matter will, however, be carefully borne in mind, and at the first opportunity he will ask the honourable member to be good enough to see him, etc.. All this seems simple and commonplace, but it is effective and the outcome of a genial, kindly personality.

I complimented L. G. on his speech. He said he had been busy most of Saturday preparing it. His reference to the economic position occupied only a few minutes, but it meant a couple of hours' investigation with the Board of Trade officials. I said the other speakers were received with very little enthusiasm. When L. G. spoke, the Common Council, etc., crowded round the back of the Hall to hear him. When he had finished, they disappeared. L. G. said he could not understand how it was that the other speakers did not get a more enthusiastic reception.

He spoke of Ireland. He said, "What do you think the public think about Ireland? Do you think they are eager for a settlement?"

R. : I think they are sick and tired of Ireland, and that there is a strong feeling that an attempt should be made to close what is felt to be a festering sore. The recent murders have created a very strong feeling.

L. G. : They are a curious people. Whenever you try to help them, they turn and rend you. The difficulty is that

whatever the Government proposes will not meet with satisfaction. Northcliffe, who has been urging a settlement, would be critical even if I adopted his scheme in the main. He would say, "You have left out a comma, and that comma is the most important thing in the whole scheme."

R. : I don't think so. I think that *The Times* people are genuinely anxious for a settlement, and that you won't have much trouble in that quarter. The real difficulty would be the Irish themselves, who are so divided in opinion.

10TH.—Campbell Stuart,<sup>1</sup> who came to tea, said that Northcliffe was not at all well.

13TH.—Lunched at Downing Street with L. G., Lord Burnham and McCormick of the *Chicago Tribune*. Much talk about America. McCormick, who is a Republican, said that American feeling was strongly against American intervention in Europe.

16TH (SUNDAY).—Dined with the P.M. at Cobham. Mrs. L. G., Sir Bertrand Dawson, Mr.<sup>2</sup> and Mrs. Macnamara, Sir Henry Hadow, Vice-Chancellor of Sheffield University, and Mr. and Mrs. Richard Lloyd George were there also.

We spoke of Sir Thomas Whittaker's<sup>3</sup> sudden death at the age of 69.

L. G. : Well, I think I should be satisfied with 69 !

BERTRAND DAWSON : I think we can guarantee you more than that !

R. : When you had reached 67, you would begin to agitate for an extension ! There would be no end of trouble !

L. G. : Well, wasn't it Hezekiah who got an extension ?

L. G. and Macnamara both referred to the difficulty of speaking in the House of Commons.

L. G. : It is a wild and savage animal ! This minute it will stroke and fondle you. The next it may rend you in pieces. You must always be watching it (suited the action to the word and looking round covertly as though he expected a lion to tap him on the shoulder).

<sup>1</sup>Sir Campbell Stuart, Managing Director of The Times Publishing Company, 1919-24.

<sup>2</sup>The Rt. Hon. T. J. Macnamara, Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, 1908-20 ; d. 1931.

<sup>3</sup>The temperance advocate ; M.P. for Spen Valley, 1892-1919 ; d. 1919.

We had an amusing talk about "Pussyfoot,"<sup>1</sup> the temperance agitator who was ragged on Thursday by London University students. I said it was a good advertisement and that Pussyfoot would welcome any opportunity of getting his name into the papers. At first most of the other members of the party doubted this, but ultimately saw the force of the observation. It is surprising how little the public understand modern publicity methods imported for the most part from America.

We had a long talk about hymns. Hadow is a great authority. He said that "O God, our help" and the "Old Hundredth" were the finest English hymn tunes, and "Moab" and "Moriah" the two best Welsh tunes.

L. G. said the Aga Khan was one of the best-informed men he had ever met. His general information was astonishing. He was extraordinarily well read and possessed an intimate acquaintance with international affairs in all parts of the world. He was widely travelled and was always moving round the capitals of Europe, in all of which he had influential intimates. His means of securing information were remarkable. He seemed to have touched upon all branches of literature and to be well versed in science. Altogether a very extraordinary person. The P.M. may have exaggerated a bit for conversational purposes, particularly as Sir Bertrand Dawson had not even heard of the Aga Khan. But evidently the P.M., who had recently sat next to him, had been very much impressed by his conversation. I had always understood he was a very clever fellow, but had never heard him praised in such high terms.

20TH.—Lunched with Sir Nevil Macready.<sup>2</sup> Long talk about the police. He said he found affairs in a bad state and that the men had much cause for complaint. The barracks were very bad, and the men were poorly paid. Matters are now greatly improved, but he has come to a standstill. He is tired and feels disposed to throw up his job and take a holiday. He gave surprising instances of the old-fashioned methods which

<sup>1</sup>W. E. Johnson, an American Prohibitionist who lectured extensively in Great Britain about this time.

<sup>2</sup>Commissioner, Metropolitan Police, 1918-20; G.O.C.-in-C. Forces in Ireland, 1920-22.

obtained at Scotland Yard when he went there. By accident he found that the appointment of all sergeants had to be confirmed by the Home Office. He asked the Home Secretary about this, and found that neither he nor any of the heads of the department were aware of the fact. The appointments were confirmed by a clerk in the basement, who merely wrote letters agreeing with what was proposed by the Chief Commissioner. There were other stupid formalities of the same sort. Then again there were dozens of complicated reports which had been ordered from time to time for the House of Commons, but which were no longer necessary. The preparation of these involved the employment of a considerable staff and an enormous amount of labour.

I told the P.M. that I thought Macready was on the point of resignation. The P.M. did not say much, but looked reflective.

23RD (SUNDAY).—Dined with L. G. at Cobham, Mrs. L. G., Mr. William George and Captain Evans also present.

I found L. G. reading Gladstone's Life. He said, "Just listen to this! Morley says that he asked Gladstone what he thought was the finest line in English verse. Gladstone quoted the line :

*Old Triton blows his wreathéd horn.*

Do you think that very good? I don't! It seems very poor stuff to me. I could give many better lines than that. Just let me read you some Welsh lines. Of course you cannot understand them, but notice how well they sound." Thereupon he produced a book of Welsh verse, from which he read extracts, which certainly sounded well. He said the sentiments were equally good.

I said that Sir Edward Cook had made the same observation on Gladstone's selection, and promised to send L. G. the essay containing this remark. Then we adjourned to dinner.

We talked of President Wilson.

L. G. : Wilson is a tragedy. He made a terrible mistake in not co-operating with the Republicans in the war. Great Britain, France and Italy all had coalition governments with great advantage.

R. : If Wilson had acted with the Republicans in the war and taken some Republican leaders with him to Paris, all would

have been well. They would have done the donkey work for him at the Peace Conference and he and they would have returned with united recommendations. It is the old story. When you are acting for other people, always make sure to carry them with you. An attorney whose retainer may be withdrawn at any moment is in a perilous position.

L. G. (laughing) : Quite right ! So he is !

We spoke of American labour troubles.

L. G. : The injunctions have been a failure, so I am told. I would not have ventured upon such a course here. Of course they may have done the right thing in America. I don't know American conditions, but our people would not have stood it. If we had a coal strike, we might clap Smillie, Hodges, Harts-horn, Brace and the other miners' leaders into jail, but do you think that would stop the strike ? Not a bit of it ! You would have the whole of the industrial community on its hind legs !

R. : And God knows what would happen !

L. G. : Yes, our people would never stand such a thing, but one must remember that Americans are much behind us in industrial affairs. I was dissatisfied with the doles insurance debate in the H. of C. this week. Although the House decided to abolish doles, the Government could not get anyone to speak for them. Personally I was against the doles being abolished. I consider that in a rich community like ours every man is entitled to live if he is willing to work. There is no doubt that there are 200,000 or 300,000 people, many of them discharged soldiers, who cannot get work. However, some people think otherwise.

We talked of critical periods in the war—of April 1917 and March 1918, of conversations and incidents—all very interesting.

Mrs. L. G. : Do you remember how we used to sit on the verandah at Walton Heath, listening to the "boom-boom" of the guns ?

L. G. : Do you remember the evening when an officer arrived from France with maps and photographs ? He had only left the battle-field that morning.

R. : I remember how he spread the maps and photographs on the ground while he was waiting for his dinner.

L. G. : Yes. I remember I had half a bottle of champagne in the house, and I gave it to him, poor fellow ! He was pretty tired.

R. : I hope we shall never see such times again.

L. G. : I hope we may never see tragic times at home. The other day Barlow,<sup>1</sup> the M.P., was dining at the Officers' Mess at Cologne. He was the only civilian there. All the soldiers were making for the politicians. He said, "What would you think if a number of politicians invited a soldier to dinner and then commenced to attack soldiers ?" That shut them up, and then old Robertson said, "Well, you can say this for the politicians, at any rate. They have prevented bloodshed at home, up to date !"

R. : At home, housing is the real difficulty. The debate in the House last week was unsatisfactory, if I may say so. There is no real enthusiasm on the part of the people who ought to build the houses. If you don't take care they will let you down. People are getting sick and tired of the delay. Twelve months have gone by and there are no houses, notwithstanding all the promises made by the Government.

L. G. : It is very difficult and complicated. But I quite agree with you as to the overwhelming importance of the subject.

We talked of Horne.

L. G. : His old mother sent him a message the other day. I can't repeat in Scots what she said, but the point was good. She said, "Robert, don't aim too high in your speeches !" That was clever of her ! Florid oratory is not his line.

R. : No, he is a clear, friendly sort of speaker.

L. G. : Yes, that's it. High flights don't suit him, but he is a clever fellow and will go far.

26TH.—Dined at Sir Abe Bailey's. Big party, including the P.M., French, Reading, etc.. French said that Irish conditions were very bad and that more severe measures would have to be adopted. I asked him what he thought about Home Rule. He replied that Home Rule was an absolute necessity. I asked him

<sup>1</sup>The Rt. Hon. Sir Montague Barlow, M.P. for S. Salford, 1910-23 ; Parly. Secretary, Minister of Labour, 1920-22 ; Minister of Labour, 1922-24.



what he thought of the Irish Government at Dublin Castle. He said, "It is as bad as it can be. I don't mean that the system is corrupt, but it is bad. There is no proper control. It is impossible to make a satisfactory alteration under existing conditions."

## Chapter XVIII

*Lady Astor takes her seat—The weakness of the Labour Party—Youth and Brotherhood—The Telegram that brought the Americans over—Housing difficulties—L. G. on his early struggles.*

DECEMBER 2ND, 1919.—Lunched at Downing Street. Present : Mr. and Mrs. L. G., H. A. L. Fisher, Minister of Education, and Sir Robertson<sup>1</sup> and Lady Nicoll.

L. G. spoke of the dinner given by the King and the Prince of Wales at Buckingham Palace the night before. He said the King made quite a simple, homely speech and that he was evidently very proud of his son. The Prince's reply was very good. He is very attractive.

R. : A certain youthful grace and nonchalance.

L. G. : Yes, that describes it.

L. G. gave an amusing account of introducing Lady Astor<sup>2</sup> into the House of Commons. He said she talked all the way up the floor of the House. This he and Balfour found most embarrassing, as it is against the rules to talk on the floor of the House. When she got to the table she almost forgot to sign the register owing to her anxiety to engage in conversation with Bonar Law. Then she wanted to have a chat with the Speaker.

NICOLL : She will soon find her level in the House.

R. : The Labour Party are making progress. Gay, the Labour candidate at Plymouth, increased his votes by several thousand. It is obvious that there are going to be two parties—a Democratic Party with a forward programme and a Labour Party.

L. G. : Yes, that is becoming quite obvious.

He again referred to the fact that the Labour leaders are not administrators. Clynes is an able man and a first-class

<sup>1</sup> d. 1923.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Astor was elected for Plymouth on Nov. 28th, 1919, and was the first woman to take her seat in the House.

speaker, but not a man of business. L. G. said that before the Labour Party can hope to govern, they must secure the adhesion of lawyers and business men.

The conversation turned on the present Parliament.

L. G. : I think this is the most easily led Parliament I have ever known. It is always open to argument. It contains representatives of all schools of thought, business men, professional men, etc..

He and Fisher spoke of the rising men of the House. The P.M. said that Arthur Neal,<sup>1</sup> a solicitor, M.P. for one of the divisions of Sheffield, was a clever man, and a first-class speaker of the Committee type. He thinks Neal is a man who will make his way. By accident L. G. heard him speak on the Electricity Bill. He was so much impressed that when Rhys Williams resigned the Under-Secretaryship of the Ministry of Transport, L. G. at once appointed Neal to succeed him. L. G. said this advancement is almost unique. He has been in the House of Commons under twelve months.

FISHER : Neal has had considerable experience in municipal life in Sheffield, and he is over fifty.

L. G. said Lloyd Graeme<sup>2</sup> was another rising man.

L. G. hazarded the observation that if the Churches combined and used all their power, they could do anything they liked.

I wonder whether he is right. He added, however, "Of course they would not combine."

They were all much interested in what I told them about the Portsmouth Brotherhood—a part of the P.S.A. movement, which I addressed yesterday. The P.S.A. motto is: "Each for all, and all for each. Do your duty to God and Man." I also gave them an account of the dinner of the Canning and Chatham Clubs which I attended recently at Oxford. Several undergraduate speakers expressed sentiments as to brotherhood similar to those I heard at Portsmouth.

<sup>1</sup>Parliamentary Private Secretary to Paymaster General, Oct. 1919; Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Transport, 1919–22; d. 1933.

<sup>2</sup>Now the Rt. Hon. Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister; Joint Secretary, Ministry of National Service, 1917–18; Parliamentary Secretary, Board of Trade, 1920–21.

The Oxford boys were insistent that there must be no more war.

L. G. : Yes, that is the feeling of the young throughout the country, I believe. And that is why Winston was all wrong over Russia. I don't think you could get an army of 500,000 men to go to Russia.

Fisher and Nicoll both said they were certain this would be impossible.

I told the party that Lord Robert Cecil had said at the Canning dinner that the failure of the Peace Treaty in America was due to two circumstances : (1) President Wilson's bad manners—he had been autocratic to the last degree, and (2) his mistake in not taking some of the leading Republicans to Paris. Had he done this, they would have returned with a united purpose.

L. G. said that President Wilson was very ill and that he thought his case hopeless.

Nicoll asked L. G. what he thought of Wilson. After some hesitation he replied, " I like him. He is an able man, but tried to do too much himself."

R. : He used to draw up dispatches himself and typewrite them.

L. G. : Yes—most wearing. His attention to detail settled him.

R. : And the heat of the rooms at the Quai d'Orsay.

L. G. : Yes, terrible ! We could never get old Clemenceau to let us have a breath of fresh air. It was most trying. How we survived it I don't know.

NICOLL : I quite agree with him. You ought always to keep fresh air in its proper place. That is outside. Fresh air is the curse of the age.

L. G. : There is another thing I like about Wilson. He has a conscience. He tries to live up to his principles.

7TH (SUNDAY).—Yesterday was the third anniversary of L. G.'s appointment as Prime Minister. To-night I dined with him. When I went in I said, " Many happy returns of the day ! " He replied, " I don't know that it is an occasion for such a wish ! "

We had a merry little party and much interesting chat.

Yesterday he made a big speech to the Manchester Liberals. He said he had a wonderful reception. The audience stood and applauded for some time.

R. : Did you see Rothermere's article to-day? Very gloomy.

L. G. : It is a curious situation. The whole world is in a state of chaos. The conditions in Central Europe are beyond description. I had to send Kerr to Paris to-night.

L. G. referred to the events of March 1918. At that time Macready, who was one of the party, was Adjutant-General. L. G. said, "You, Macready, were like a conjuror! You pulled 10,000 men out of this sleeve, 20,000 out of that, 30,000 out of one trouser pocket, and 50,000 out of another. It was marvellous. Where you got the men, we did not know!"

MACREADY : It was a troublesome job, but I thought it could be done. Maclay<sup>1</sup> said he could take over 20,000 men a day. That surprised me. When you wanted a ship Maclay had never got one, but when the occasion arose the ships were always there. It was a great feat.

L. G. : That was a memorable meeting we had at the War Office. I shall never forget it.

R. : When was it you sent your telegram to Wilson?<sup>2</sup>

L. G. : I think it was the next week. That telegram gave a great deal of trouble. I do not believe that so much time and labour were ever expended on a telegram of such small dimensions. I gave the idea, and then several of us sat on the wording. Kerr did the actual writing out. I wonder where the draft is? It is a historic document and produced stupendous consequences. I must have that draft looked out and preserved.

14TH (SUNDAY).—To dinner with Mr. and Mrs. L. G. alone at Cobham. L. G. said he had had a most exhausting week. He did not remember ever working harder. His conferences with Clemenceau had been most important. They had settled many big things. The conferences are to be resumed in Paris in a fortnight. L. G. expects to be in France fourteen

<sup>1</sup>Now Lord Maclay, Shipping Controller, 1916-21.

<sup>2</sup>This telegram produced the reply that President Wilson would send over 120,000 men per month for three months if the Allies would provide the shipping.

days or thereabouts. Most of the time will be spent in settling the Turkish treaty.

R. : How is old Clemenceau ?

L. G. : The old boy was in splendid form. More cynical than ever. He said, " I have become a regular fetish. Even the priests and Roman Catholic ladies have taken me up. I am like those little charms that the ladies put on their breasts. They have no hesitation in putting me there nowadays. At my age I am not dangerous ! " I had a curious talk with Clemenceau about force. We were at lunch and he had some chicken on his plate. He pointed to the chicken and said, " That chicken was brought here by force. It would not have come here in any other way. But very nice it is, and very necessary, and in short it is very difficult to dispense with force ! " We cleared up the Russian situation somewhat. Clemenceau is not prepared to spend any money. He thinks there is no longer any danger of Bolshevism in France. The elections have proved that, and that is one reason why he has altered his opinion. He is a hard old dog.

R. : When a man gets to seventy-eight and has been through what Clemenceau has been through, it tends to make him hard and perhaps cynical.

L. G. : Yes, but Gladstone was not cynical at seventy-eight, and (pointing to the mask of Lincoln) that man would never have become cynical if he had lived to be a hundred. No, the truth is that temperamentally Clemenceau is hard and narrow. As Briand said, he was born with one day's good nature inside him and he used it up pretty quickly !

R. : But at times he rose to great heights. Take for example the speech when he became Prime Minister.

L. G. : Yes, he is a great patriot. France is everything to him. He thinks of France and her dangers and her greatness, and it rouses in him wonderful emotions.

21ST.—As customary, to Cobham, where I found Fisher, Minister of Education, and Scott<sup>1</sup> of the *Manchester Guardian*, who had come to see L. G. about Irish Home Rule at his invitation. L. G. had been busy dictating his speech, which was

<sup>1</sup> Charles Prestwich Scott, Editor, *Manchester Guardian*, 1872-1929; d. 1932.

being typed in an adjoining room. At dinner he asked how we thought the proposals would be received.<sup>1</sup> Fisher said that no party in Ireland would be satisfied, but that when the scheme was put into force he thought the Irish would work it. Scott was of the same opinion.

L. G. : There will be no enthusiasm. I hate my job in the House of Commons to-morrow. The Unionists naturally will not be enthusiastic. Carson will not oppose, but he will be very critical and frigid, and the Nationalists, if they come, will be unfriendly. It is a most unfortunate country. Something awkward always occurs at critical moments in her history. There was the assassination of Lord Frederick Cavendish, there was Parnell's downfall, and now there is this dastardly attack on Lord French.<sup>2</sup> I wish someone else was going to make the speech to-morrow. I wanted him (pointing to Fisher) to do it, but he declined. (Fisher smiled.)

R. : Well, you have this in your favour. There is a general feeling that something must be done, and most people will be willing to give any reasonable scheme favourable consideration.

L. G., Fisher and Scott assented to this very obvious remark. I stayed on after the others had gone. As L. G. said "Good night" I wished him good luck on the morrow. He said, "I have a terrible task, but must do my best. I can't say I am enthusiastic, but I shall do my utmost."

On Saturday (yesterday) I played golf with L. G. and Sassoon, M.P. for Folkestone. Much talk about Spen Valley. L. G. told us that the Coalition organisation had been very bad, that nothing had been done until he personally took the

<sup>1</sup>Mr. Lloyd George's scheme, the main provisions of which were embodied in the Home Rule Act of 1920, proposed to set up two Parliaments in Ireland, one in Belfast for six counties carved out of Ulster and the other in Dublin for the remaining 26 counties. Between them was to be a Federal Council for All Ireland consisting of 40 members elected in equal parts from each Parliament. Forty-two members were to sit in the Imperial Parliament. The passing of the Act aggravated the situation in the South, but the Six Counties Parliament was established and has functioned ever since.

<sup>2</sup>While driving near Phoenix Park on December 19th, Lord French (Lord Lieutenant, 1918-21) was attacked by a party of men armed with bombs and revolvers. He escaped without injury.

matter in hand and sent down some good speakers. His energy is wonderful where he is interested. He does things and acts with promptitude. I had tea with Sassoon at his mansion in Park Lane. He remarked in course of conversation on the attitude of the working-classes, "In this huge house I occupy only four rooms. Sometimes I ask myself whether the State ought not to take the rest of the house for those who cannot otherwise secure houses." It is a sign of the times that such an idea should have entered a millionaire's brain.

28TH.—To Criccieth. On Tuesday, December 22nd, J. T. Davies<sup>1</sup> asked me to call at Downing Street. When I arrived I was handed a letter stating that the P.M. had decided to advise His Majesty to give me a peerage, in recognition of my public work. J. T., Miss S. and Kerr all said nice things. I wrote a letter of thanks to L. G. at Criccieth, in which I said amongst other things that our friendship had been one of the joys of my life and that many of my happiest hours had been spent with him. When I reached Criccieth, I thanked him again. He said, "My dear boy, it has been a pleasure to be able to do it for you!" He remarked that he thought of bringing in a Bill which would allow a member of the House of Commons to attend and speak in the Lords in support of any Bill of which he might be in charge, and *vice versa*. Then he added, "I shall attend, and I shall write to Northcliffe telling him that I shall be there and that if he wants to challenge my actions that is the proper place and not from behind the hedge of a newspaper." He said this with flashing eyes.

L. G. : I heard a good lecture on America last night by a clever fellow named Daniells. He said a clever thing about Wilson. The Americans think he is like a Dissenting Minister who has been playing cards with two sharpers—Clemenceau and me—and has lost heavily, unfortunately not his own money, but the funds belonging to the chapel!

29TH.—L. G. said he thought it a mistake for statesmen to read too many newspapers. (He commits the error himself, if it be an error!) He added, "When all is said, it is a matter of achievement. At the present time the national affairs look like a building in course of construction. Things look untidy

<sup>1</sup>One of Mr. Lloyd George's secretaries; now Sir John Davies.



and disorderly because they are unfinished. I had the same experience in the war in 1917. I could not get unity of command, and the submarine menace was serious and pressing, and my plans for meeting it were incomplete. But it all came right in the end. The same thing applies here. If trade becomes brisk and profitable, and if our housing scheme works out satisfactorily, the nation will not pay much attention to newspaper comment. There will of course be a certain amount of unemployment, and proper measures must be provided for the support of those who are inevitably unemployed.

R. : 200,000 houses will be the best answer the Government can furnish. They will speak for themselves and cannot be ascribed to fortuitous circumstances.

L. G. : I doubt if we can build 200,000 in a year.

R. : Well, 150,000.

L. G. : We might do that. It is a difficult problem. Labour and the cost of building are serious difficulties.

R. : But greater difficulties were surmounted in the war. I wonder if those responsible for building the houses are really anxious to build them ? The local authorities do not appear as enthusiastic as they might be.

The conversation did not proceed beyond this point, but I am doubtful about the housing scheme. However, we shall see. The delay is doing the Government much harm.

L. G. is much taken up with his little granddaughter, Margaret (the daughter of Olwen). At meal-times he takes her on his knee and feeds her with tit-bits, and is perpetually walking hand in hand with her about the house. She is a dignified, clever little creature. There is a great contrast between the life here and that in the millionaire's flat in which L. G. lived in Paris, with its French cooking, etc.. This is a comfortable villa, such as a prosperous tradesman might have. Everything is comfortable, but there are no frills. L. G. is very adaptable. When one sees him here, one would never imagine that he had ever lived under any other conditions. Full of fun with his wife and children. To-day he was much perturbed about the health of his small nephew, and descanted at length upon the diet which should be provided for the small boy.

We talked of speeches. He said he thought his Limehouse speech<sup>1</sup> perhaps the best he had made. Sidney Buxton was in the chair, and the speech caused consternation to him and other old-fashioned Liberals who were present. To-day it looks quite a mild affair. As usual the conversation drifted upon the labour question. L. G. again advanced the proposition that the only way in which production and progress could be assured was by using the great commercial and organising minds. "Then," he said, "if they make too much money, take it from them through the medium of death duties. I am a death duty man, and always have been."

R. : The very wealthy are learning to dodge the death duties.

L. G. : Then we shall have to stop them from doing so.

L. G. said that Beaverbrook is trying to split the Coalition. "If he did," added L. G., "I might say and should say that I found the Tories unsympathetic to the cause of true social reform, and that I meant to take my own line."

31st.—Conversed with L. G. on the subject of wives.

L. G. : Sometimes I wonder whether it is well for a wife to be appreciative of her husband. My wife never was. She never thought I should make a great mark. When I was first asked to stand for Parliament, she dissuaded me.

R. : But when you made the plunge, she displayed great courage.

L. G. : Yes, she is full of courage, and she never hankered after society. She kept me to the simple life. That was a great advantage. Even now I feel that it is good for me to come down here and live in a simple way. Temperamentally I like a simple life. Society has no attractions for me, but it is well to have a wife whose interests are centred entirely in her modest home.

R. : You must have had a great struggle in your early days.

L. G. : Yes, it was an awful struggle. Fate has a way of castigating you when you are successful, and sometimes when I fear that she may stretch out her hand against me, I think that perhaps I may be spared because I have suffered sufficiently already. The pinch of respectable poverty was hard to bear. I had to do the best I could with my practice. No one ever

<sup>1</sup> On July 30th, 1909

helped me. Lord Rendel and other wealthy men might have assisted me by putting work in my way but they never did. When I became President of the Board of Trade, I was overdrawn £400 at the Bank. My action in the Boer War<sup>1</sup> ruined my practice.

<sup>1</sup>Mr. Lloyd George's pro-Boer speeches at this time aroused much opposition, and on December 18th, 1901, he had a narrow escape from injury after one of his meetings at Birmingham Town Hall had been broken up. The police insisted, for his safety, on disguising him as a constable before allowing him to leave.

## Chapter XIX

*L. G. on his maiden speech—The signing of the Protocol—Gladstone's sense of humour—Northcliffe's criticisms—A proposal to make him Lord Lieutenant—War and peace with Russia.*

JANUARY 1ST, 1920.—We talked of first speeches in the House of Commons. I pointed out to L. G. certain passages he had marked, apparently thirty years ago, in Disraeli's letters, in which Disraeli described the requisites of a first speech.

L. G. : Well, don't you think what he says very good ?

R. : Yes.

L. G. : Knowledge is what tells. I made my name in the House of Commons by a speech on rating. I happened to know a good deal about it and Charles Harrison, another solicitor member, was also well versed in the subject, but he was a poor speaker and was always getting ruled out of order. So he gave me his stuff. Added to my own it enabled me to make a very strong statement. That made me. The House of Commons judges a new man by his knowledge.

R. : The Press complain that speakers in the House lower their voices.

L. G. : It is not so much that they lower their voices. The difficulty arises from the fact that the reporters are in the wrong part of the House. You must speak to your audience if you wish to be effective. You must look at the faces of those whom you are addressing. I know them so well—the hostile face, the doubting face, the face that agrees. It is those faces that make for Parliamentary oratory. You must look at them. You can't be looking at the reporters. Gladstone was the best of all Parliamentary speakers. He had all the gifts—voice and elocution. He was immense.

We talked of prohibition. L. G. thinks it will tend to industrial efficiency in America and that our business men will start a campaign in favour of prohibition in self defence.

R. : What will be the result ?

L. G. : Revolution eventually. A sober nation will not submit to the existing economic system. Whether they can improve upon it I am very doubtful. I am more and more inclined to individualism and freedom. I am coming to think that as a rule the private individual does better than the State. Of course there are exceptions.

We talked much of the by-elections and Spen Valley in particular. L. G. is fully convinced that the Coalition will lose Spen Valley. I said the lesson of the by-elections is that the lower middle-classes are joining hands with Labour, strictly so called. The journalists' union, for example, are federating with the printers.

8TH.—To Paris, to attend resumed Peace Conference. Travelled with L. G., Bonar Law, Curzon, etc.. B. L. and Curzon congratulated me on my peerage. Both very kind.

L. G. in high spirits, but much obsessed by Northcliffe and his alleged villainies. I said, "The British public are not fools. They judge by results. You are being ruined by the failure of your housing scheme. If you could wave a magic wand and produce two hundred thousand houses, Northcliffe's criticisms would not matter. The Government will have to face the financial position. Houses cannot be built to let at economic rents. All the same, the nation must have houses and unless they get them there will be trouble." I gave him figures which he did not seem able to refute.

10TH.—Signing of the Protocol and *procès-verbal* ratifying the Treaty. It was interesting to see old Clemenceau going through the ceremony—the quick way in which he walked round the tables. L. G. said that after the signing of Protocol, which took place in a private room, Clemenceau had to shake hands with the German delegate. He said to L. G., "I spat on the place in order to commemorate it !"

Dinner with Birkenhead, Bonar Law, and others. Much talk about the political situation, etc..

It was generally agreed that unless the Liberals and Conservatives join forces and present a united front, they will find themselves in serious difficulties. Birkenhead was all for this, but B. L. said very little, and it is obvious that the older section of the Conservatives are not disposed to give up their

organisation and place themselves unreservedly in L. G.'s power.

13TH.—Dinner. L. G., Bonar Law, Montagu, and others present. We talked about Bright and Gladstone. Montagu related a good story of John Morley, who was discussing their relative merits as orators. Morley said, "I think Gladstone was the better speaker, but on the Day of Judgment I would rather be Bright—that is if there is a Day of Judgment!"

B. L. said that Gladstone had no humour. L. G. denied this and gave an account of a speech delivered by Mr. G. replying to a question by Chamberlain on Uganda. The old man spoke for forty minutes but in such a way as to make it impossible to gather what his intentions were. Then he added, looking archly at Chamberlain, "Having regard to what I have said, I am sure my right honourable friend will agree that our policy with reference to Uganda is quite plain."

14TH.—Campbell Stuart came to dinner. In the course of the evening he made the interesting suggestion that L. G. should offer the position of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to Northcliffe.

I said if I were Northcliffe I should regard such an offer as a snare and that, having regard to N.'s state of health, it might be suicide to accept such a position. C. S. did not agree. He thinks N. would make a good Lord Lieutenant. He says, which is quite true, that he has good judgment and would give sound decisions. He added that Lady N. would also make an excellent social leader. C. S. suggested I should mention this to L. G..

15TH.—I told L. G. what C. S. had said. He did not, as I expected, meet the proposal with ridicule. On the contrary, he seemed to be rather favourable.

On Monday I had a long talk with Pomeroy Burton, a large shareholder in the *Daily Mail*. He told me that N.'s health is very bad.

Long interview with Derby, who wished to consult me about some Press matters. He remarked that the quarrel between L. G. and Northcliffe was most unfortunate and was doing much harm to Great Britain.

LORD D. : I am not a politician now, although I may



MR. LLOYD GEORGE AND LORD RIDDELL SAYING GOOD-BYE  
TO FRANCE AFTER THE PEACE CONFERENCE

(June 29th, 1919)

become one at any time. I have resolutely declined to take any part in politics while I am Ambassador, and never express an opinion on the subject, but I see the effect of this campaign on our position here. The result is that an impression is created that L. G.'s stock is very low in his own country and that it is steadily falling. That reacts on his position in France. I think it most serious that the French should have a wrong view about this. It injures Great Britain.

R. : A suggestion has been made, not by L. G., that N. should be made Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. What do you think of that ?

LORD D. : There might be something in the idea.

22ND.—The Russian situation. L. G. has displayed much persistence and sagacity in pursuing the policy he has undoubtedly held from the early days of the Conference. The Allies now understand the impossibility of fighting the Bolsheviks in Russia. No nation is prepared to supply troops or money. This week the Conference (Clemenceau, L. G. and Nitti<sup>1</sup>) decided to enter into arrangements with the Russian co-operative societies for the exchange of commodities. Contemporaneously the War Office issued a semi-official statement that a new war was imminent, for which the Allies must be prepared. This caused a great sensation, intensified by the arrival in Paris of Winston, Walter Long, Henry Wilson and Lord Beatty.

I directed L. G.'s attention to the War Office statement and asked for an explanation. L. G. said it was unauthorised. Winston and Henry Wilson said the same, but added, "It is true, nevertheless." Both Winston and Wilson denied that they knew of the weekly meetings at which information is issued by the War Office to the Press. I told them that important declarations of this kind should not be made by a junior officer at a private meeting of newspaper reporters, but should be made publicly by some responsible person. Subsequently a sort of denial was issued by the Government. [The story is best told in L. G.'s own words—see January 24th.]

Yesterday lunched with Campbell Stuart, who said he had a message from Northcliffe for me, viz. : "Tell Riddell, that

<sup>1</sup>Italian Premier, 1919-20.



if there is a dispute between L. G. and Winston regarding intervention in Russia, I shall support the Prime Minister." Campbell Stuart attached great importance to this message. I communicated it to L. G., who was, of course, much interested.

While in Paris I saw a good deal of the Lord Chancellor (F. E.)—an interesting study. Very clever and brilliant, but perhaps too convivial. He is excellent company and must be as strong as a horse. He is very kindly, generous and good-natured, but has queer political notions about controlling the working-classes, trade unionism, etc..

He told an amusing story of Lord Haig. When Haig was sworn in at the House of Lords, he had to kneel before him, (F. E.) as Lord Chancellor. F. E. leaned over and said to him, "Now I am in a billet from which you cannot expel me." Haig<sup>1</sup> took this in good part and told the story at his club the same evening. F. E. is quite oblivious of the opinion held by many people regarding himself. This quality is both a source of strength and weakness. He said he intends to continue to play a political rôle as was formerly the practice with Lord Chancellors. He has great gifts. Clemenceau was much impressed by his speech before the Peace Conference concerning the demand for the surrender of the Kaiser. F. E. told me he was rather nervous when he made it.

I travelled back with L. G.. As we neared Dover he pointed out one of the breakwaters and remarked, "It was there I stood awaiting old Ribot, when he came to confer regarding the peace overtures of Prince Sixte."<sup>2</sup>

24TH.—Played golf with L. G. at St. George's Hill. This was what he said about Russia :

L. G. : While we were in Paris, Winston was very excited about Russia. I had to handle him firmly. He was most insistent, and prepared to sacrifice both men and money. Now he is changing his views on Russia. I think the leader

<sup>1</sup> A reference to the incident of January 1916, when Lord Birkenhead (then F. E. Smith) was arrested in France for travelling without a permit.

<sup>2</sup> In March 1917, when Prince Sixte of Bourbon-Parma and his brother, Prince Xavier, who were serving with the Belgian Army, conveyed to President Poincaré secret letters from the Emperor Karl of Austria proposing a separate peace. The two Princes were the brothers of the Empress.

in this week's *British Weekly*, which is able and bitter, helped to modify his ideas. He wanted to issue an official explanation. I did not object but would not agree to his draft. He wanted to justify what he had done and also to withdraw. I would not agree to that. I said, "You can withdraw if you like, but I will not be a party to any justification." I am glad these Russian schemes have been crushed. I don't believe that India is in any danger. When Russia was well equipped the Russians could not cross the mountains.

R. : The chief danger is Bolshevik propaganda.

L. G. : Yes, but you can't keep ideas out of a country by a military cordon. They will percolate somehow. You must take other steps to counteract such attempts. The trouble in Georgia is that Denikin<sup>1</sup> is opposed to the new states so that in protecting them you are fighting Denikin. That places Winston in an awkward quandary (laughing).

31ST.—Golfed with L. G. and Sassoon at Burhill. L. G. in very good form. He says Asquith's return for Paisley would be bad for the country, as it would give fresh life to the Asquithian party, which should join up with other constitutional forces.

Sassoon was quite amusing about Sargent, the artist.<sup>2</sup> He said, "Sargent cannot begin his sentences and starts them in the middle with a wave of his hand for the beginning, while Haig cannot finish his and often concludes with hand-work instead of words. In consequence, the meeting between the two was quite amusing—a series of little pantomimes." Sassoon took Haig to see a remarkable picture by Sargent showing a railway train full of men going up to the Front in the twilight. Haig looked at it intently for some time and then, turning to Sargent, remarked, "I see—one of our light railways!" This pleased L. G. immensely. He said, "Just like Haig. No imagination! What did Sargent say?"

SASSOON : Nothing, only smiled.

<sup>1</sup> Leader of the revolt against the Bolsheviks in Southern Russia.

<sup>2</sup> J. S. Sargent, R.A. ; d. 1925.

## Chapter XX

*L. G. faced with a party crisis—Retirement, resignation or fusion?  
—The Peace Conference comes to London—President Wilson  
threatens—More talk of a new party.*

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1ST, 1920.—Dined with L. G.. After dinner he said : " I am faced with a serious crisis and must make up my mind how to act. I have told Bonar Law that I am not going on like this. We are losing by-election after by-election. There is no proper political organisation in the country and no enthusiasm. A great deal can be done by working the constituencies. I know this from my experience in connection with the 1910 Budget and the Insurance Bill. When the Budget was first announced, it met, as you will remember, with strong opposition. This was countered by a great campaign—speeches, leaflets, etc.. The same applies to the Insurance Act. No bill was ever more unpopular. It was assailed by employers and employed.

R. : And by the doctors.

L. G. : Yes, by the doctors too, and very vigorously. Not a day passed but there was some agitation against the Bill. Well, you know what was done. We fought hard and we won. Now there are three courses open for me :

First to retire. I can say, " We have won the war. We have made the Peace. We have started the reconstruction. I am preparing to go on supporting the policy which I have initiated but I want a rest. I have held office for fourteen years. That is a long time for any man to hold office." That would put me in a very strong position. Government is difficult—I don't mean this government, but all government. So many subjects demand the attention of the head of the state that he has too little time for thought about big subjects. If I had more time I could make some good speeches. Nowadays I have to make many of my speeches without much thought, and some of them important speeches. When I prepare a speech I have to

commit it to paper more or less. I have not got the time to memorise it so as to deliver it without much reference to notes. That spoils both the speech and its delivery. In the old days I used to prepare carefully and absorb and digest what I had prepared so that when the time came I could speak without much reference to notes. It is difficult for anyone to appreciate the tremendous strain of modern government. Every day brings a new problem. That is one of the chief objections to nationalisation. All sorts of important questions would be certain to arise, and the parties interested would always want a decision from the head of the state. In fact the whole of his time would be taken up in dealing with such matters. He would not have sufficient time for government, using the term in its ordinary sense. That is a grave objection. It is an objection which has not been seriously considered either by those who favour or those who oppose nationalisation. But that by the way.

My second course would be to resign and organise the Coalition Liberals into a stronger party. I should lead them in the House of Commons and that too would give me a strong position.

My third course is fusion—I mean fusion between the two branches of the Coalition. There is much to be said for that. Bonar Law and Arthur Balfour favour it. Bonar of course hates to do anything, but he sees the imperative necessity and so he is prepared to act. Now, what do you say?

R. : The main point is the advance of the Labour Party. Unless the constitutional forces join together they will lose elections all over the country. That is obvious. The normal course would be to call meetings of the two branches of the Coalition, explain the position to them and suggest a fusion under a new name and with a new programme—a Democratic Party with a forward policy. If they decided in the affirmative, you would of course be their natural leader, but perhaps you may not be prepared to go on. No man has borne a greater strain. You may well want a rest. That is a question which only you can decide.

L. G. : I feel quite well. I am not tired. In fact I feel better than I did eighteen months ago. From that point of view there is no reason why I should not go on.

R. : Well, then there is the question of loyalty to your followers. The Conservatives and Coalition Liberals have been faithful to you. The majority in the House of Commons is most obedient. That being so, you cannot well desert your followers if they wish you to go on and are prepared to accept your programme, which will have to be a forward programme. Any other would be useless. You will have to give your people the option.

L. G. : That is quite true. They have treated me well. They gave me my chance to win the war, and, as you say, they support me loyally in the House of Commons. From that point of view I am quite with you, and I agree about the programme. It might be necessary for us to shed some of the most reactionary members of our party—some of the hard commercial men who have no bowels of compassion for the mass of the people—men who look upon workers as nothing more than producers of goods. I will never stand for that. I told Bonar Law so, and, to do the Conservatives justice, I don't believe they care for these people any more than I do. I told Bonar my views, and that while for some reasons I should like to retire, for others I felt bound to go on as a matter of loyalty to our people. Of course all the younger Conservatives are strongly in favour of fusion—men like Horne, Worthington-Evans, etc.. Have you seen the pamphlet written by Chiozza Money for the Paisley election ? It is a remarkable document. I have it here (reading). You will see that he advises Labour not to vote for Asquith for the purpose of turning me out. In effect he says, " We prefer Labour to Lloyd George, but we prefer Lloyd George to Asquith." That is a remarkable pronouncement. You will see also that he says that the Tories and propertied classes are not quite sure about me, but they have no doubts about Asquith. They are quite right there. Asquith would rather be shot than do anything to which the propertied classes would really object.

9TH.—When speaking of repartees, L. G. said that Sir William Harcourt once remarked to Lord Beresford, " You don't look like an orator ! " " No," said Beresford, " and you don't look like a turncoat ! " which Harcourt was, of course. L. G. said that was one of the best repartees he had ever heard.

We set to work to construct a Cabinet of men who would be selected by a woman Prime Minister. I said L. G. and Balfour would be certain of places as they were very popular with women.

L. G. : So far as A. J. B. is concerned, I agree. He is always surrounded by a bevy of female admirers, but I don't know about myself. Well, what about the rest of the Cabinet ? Robert Horne would be certain of a place, and I think they would choose Barnes. But I am bound to say that now I am stumped.

An amusing incident took place the other day in Paris. Sir Henry Wilson met Orpen on the staircase. Orps' picture of Wilson depicts him almost as an ogre. Orpen passed the time of day with Wilson, who leaned over and hissed out at the little man, " Wasp ! "

12TH.—Peace Conference resumed in London. At the request of the newspapers I re-started my Paris conferences with the Press.

13TH.—While I was waiting at Downing Street, L. G. came out of the Cabinet Room where the Peace Conference had been sitting. He said, " On Sunday I am going to play golf. I must have some fresh air. There is no valid reason why I should not play. Everybody else does, and I see no reason why I should submit myself to a self-denying ordinance. So on Sunday we will have a game. It will be my first game in England on a Sunday—quite a momentous occasion ! I may be damned spiritually ! "

R. : The trouble is that you won't know until a later date, when it will be too late.

L. G. : Well, I must just take my chance !

14TH.—Had a chat with L. G. in the Cabinet Room. The Conference sat until 7.15 p.m.. He was wonderfully fresh—full of fun and conversation, although he had had a gruelling week ; two big speeches in the House of Commons and endless conferences. No doubt his wonderful freshness and vitality are due to his daily naps. Almost invariably he has a sleep during the afternoon. That brightens him up and gives him a fresh start. Bonar Law came in. I told him that cynical critics of the P.M. were making the jocular suggestion that a

certain Minister to whom they strongly objected was kept in office only because he was L. G.'s illegitimate son. This caused B. L. much merriment. I have never before seen him so much amused. He told me a story about Beaverbrook. Recently the *Daily Express*, Beaverbrook's paper, published an exclusive article regarding Barnes's retirement. Bonar Law said someone went from the Government to Beaverbrook and asked him where he got the information. Beaverbrook replied, "Will you undertake not to divulge the source if I tell you?" "Yes!" was the answer. "Well," said Beaverbrook, "we got it from —'s mistress!" The point of the story is that — is the last word in respectability.

Notwithstanding B. L.'s gloominess he is a first-class talker, with a remarkable sense of humour and a wonderful budget of apposite stories. I always rejoice when I get an opportunity of a chat with him.

15TH (SUNDAY).—Golfed with L. G. at St. George's Hill.

This morning President Wilson's letter calling for Lansing's<sup>1</sup> resignation was published.

L. G. : What did you think of Wilson's letter? Is it not an amazing document? I have never seen such a letter written by a public man. If you find me writing letters like that, I hope you will lock me up!

R. : The letter is so pompous that it looks as if the writer were suffering from mental exaltation!

L. G. : It certainly looks very strange.

Later, when we returned, L. G. again read the correspondence and punctuated it with comments. He said, "Lansing wrote a good letter. His statement that his resignation came as a relief was an effective thrust and he makes other good points. I am sorry about Wilson. I got to like him. He was a very nice man. I shall never forget the day I left Paris after the Peace Conference. I opened the windows at the rue Nitot and gazed on Wilson's house, shorn of all its pomp—no guards, no detectives and the windows all shuttered. I felt I was closing a book that would never be reopened—a book of intense interest. It was an anxious time, but a pleasant time. I enjoyed it. I doubt if I shall ever spend such another. It was all

<sup>1</sup> Wilson's Secretary of State; d. 1928.

so vivid. I felt as I looked at the empty house with its closed shutters that I should never see Wilson again and that these historic scenes had passed away never to return. I don't mind confessing that a feeling of sadness crept over me."

L. G. then changed his tone and referred to the President's letter, just received, regarding the Adriatic question.

L. G. : The letter is a most pompous, dictatorial document, and in our reply we shall have to make our position clear.

[In his letter the President says among other things that if the Peace Conference as now constituted insists on settling the Adriatic question in a manner contrary to the American view, he will have no alternative but to withdraw from the ratification of the Peace Treaty and from the agreement entered into with the French. Of course this would involve a separate peace with Germany, but he does not mention that. The newspapers are furious at the action of the Peace Conference in not publishing Wilson's letter and their answer when ready. We are back again in Paris—the old controversy—the Press against the Conference—secret *v.* open diplomacy. I strongly urged publication of the Conference's letters to the Dutch regarding the Kaiser, and to the Germans regarding the trial of persons charged with breaches of the laws of war. Ultimately I got my way. The letters were handed out by me this (Monday) morning, and published in Tuesday's papers.]

We again discussed the proposal to form a new party.

L. G. : I had the Liberal Ministers down to Cobham this week—Addison, Shortt,<sup>1</sup> Fisher, Gordon Hewart,<sup>2</sup> Kellaway and Macnamara. Fisher and Shortt were strongly against anything being done at present. They said action was premature. Gordon Hewart took the same view until he heard my case. Then he veered over to my way of thinking. Addison and Macnamara, who know much more about electioneering than the other three, and Kellaway, were all for immediate action. I had them at Cobham because one cannot talk in London.

<sup>1</sup>The Rt. Honourable Edward Shortt, K.C., Chief Secretary for Ireland, 1918-19; Home Secretary, 1919-22.

<sup>2</sup>Now Lord Hewart, Solicitor-General, 1916-19; Attorney-General, 1919-22.



Someone is always coming in or there is always some message. For example, Wilson's letter about the Adriatic arrived late at night. The American Ambassador brought it round. It was most inconvenient to have to deal with such an important document at such a late hour. However, these things cannot be helped, but if you have an important conference the only way to conduct it in comfort is to get away from London, and that was my idea the other night. Are you (R.) of the same opinion as you were a fortnight ago?

R. : Yes, I think you want action now.

L. G. : It is difficult to know what to do. Max Muspratt,<sup>1</sup> one of the chief Liberal leaders in Liverpool, asked to see me. I had him to breakfast this morning. He and his people are much concerned with the progress of Labour and with Labour ideals. Apparently the Labour people are very active in Liverpool and very aggressive. Muspratt said that a new party combining all the constitutional forces was inevitable, but that it would come of itself and that it was a mistake to rush it. He is right perhaps, and perhaps Addison, Macnamara and Kellaway are right. But this is certain. We must be on the move. We cannot let things remain as they are.

I complimented him on his speeches in the House this week. I said, "Your speech concerning the nationalisation of the mines was one of the best you have made—very argumentative, and although it had no vivid passages, it maintained a steady level. It had no ragged bits."

L. G. : I am glad to hear that. I had very little time for preparation and much of the speech was impromptu. Lunn,<sup>2</sup> the Labour leader, made a tactical error. He threatened direct action. I saw the opening and went for it. I think my speech was a success. The Labour people are on weak ground there. They will make a great mistake if they go in for a general strike. Their position in the country is rapidly improving and they are certain to win a lot of seats. If they engage in a big strike for political purposes they will set the nation against them and have a big set-back.

We talked much of the Paisley election. L. G. thinks

<sup>1</sup>Now Sir Max Muspratt.

<sup>2</sup>William Lunn, M.P.

Asquith will get in, but that this will be unfortunate, as it will help to re-establish the "Wee Frees." He thinks Asquith will make very little difference in the House of Commons. L. G. told Max Muspratt, who suggested that L. G. and A. should combine, that there was no hope of this, as for personal reasons Mr. A. would not serve under L. G..

I referred to the fact that L. G. is now President of the Peace Conference, being the only original member left.

L. G. : Yes, I think we are getting on better with the work. Clemenceau was wonderful during the war, and fought hard for France at the Conference, but he had not got the knack of driving business through. Then of course Wilson took up a lot of time by making speeches. Nitti and I are very much in agreement. That makes things easier. The French are difficult to get on with when they have the upper hand. Of course I loved old Clemenceau. He was a delightful person to work with—such personality and so much wit, and his knowledge of English facilitated the conduct of business. It is true we had several "sets to." On two or three occasions I had to go for the old boy. That was necessary. If he thought you were afraid of him he would ride roughshod over you. But we got on very well, taking all things into account, and the same may be said of the relations of all three of us—Clemenceau, Wilson and myself. They were both big men and looked at things in a big way. There is nothing petty about Clemenceau. He is a great personage and will go down to history as a great man. I hear that the old boy is enjoying himself in Egypt and that he is full of life. That is good news.

22ND.—Golfed with L. G. and Macnamara. Returned to lunch at Cobham. Found there Lord Lytton,<sup>1</sup> Auckland and Lady Geddes and Mrs. L. G..

L. G. referred to the forthcoming debate in the Lords on the alleged negotiations between the Government and the Labour Party. He said it was important that the Government's case should be stated, and asked Lytton to prepare a speech in case the Lord Chancellor might not be back in time. I said the speech ought to be sympathetic to Labour. Everyone agreed about this.

<sup>1</sup> Civil Lord of the Admiralty, 1919-20 ; Under Sec. for India, 1920-22.

Lytton struck me as an able young man of the idealistic type. He was very pleasant.

After lunch I went for a walk with Auckland Geddes on the Common. I pointed out to him the house of Mrs. Earle, mother of Lionel Earle of the Office of Works. I said, "She is a great gardener. She infused the love of gardening into her son, with splendid results for Londoners. He is revolutionising the London parks and making them the most beautiful in the world."

Geddes said he was going to Washington if the Government were prepared to make the necessary financial arrangements. The Embassy costs at least £10,000 per annum, which means in these times, owing to the exchange, nearly £15,000. He said he could not afford to pay this out of his own pocket. He thought the Government could not get anybody to go unless they paid the expenses.

We had a long discussion on the subject of exchange and high prices. Geddes acute, but professorial. I said, "You have had a wonderful career. You are only forty. You were trained as a doctor, became a distinguished professor and head of a university, have fought in two wars, have been Director of Recruiting, Minister of National Service, President of the Local Government Board, Minister of Reconstruction; you are President of the Board of Trade and now you may occupy one of the greatest ambassadorial positions in the world." He answered, "Yes, I have had wonderful experiences."

24TH.—Went to the Leather Sellers' Company with L. G., who received the Freedom.

29TH (SUNDAY).—Golfed and spent the day with L. G.. Much talk of the political situation, which grows more and more perplexing. Asquith elected this week for Paisley by a large majority, and the "Wee Frees" consequently much elated and full of fight. In the Wrekin division, Palmer,<sup>1</sup> a candidate run by Bottomley,<sup>2</sup> at the head of the poll.

R. : You will have to take more active steps to form your new party. The Coalition are like an army with brilliant leaders but no organisation or proper team work. The Conservatives don't support the Liberal candidates and *vice versa*.

<sup>1</sup> Charles Palmer, journalist; d. 1920.

<sup>2</sup> Horatio Bottomley, advocate of a "Business Government"; d. 1933.

L. G. : Yes, we have no proper side. Something must be done. I am taking measures. I have written a letter. Of course I am strong in the House of Commons. I can go on for four years and then I can retire. That will be long enough. I shall then have been in office for seven years. That is time enough for any man. I don't think I could go on longer. But I agree that the position is unhealthy. Constant defeats at by-elections are disheartening to everyone and the party lose enthusiasm. The members feel that they are not properly supported.

## Chapter XXI

*J. H. Thomas on Labour extremists—The effect of responsibility—  
L. G. wants peace with Russia—More newspaper attacks—  
Revolution in Germany—L. G.'s changed attitude towards  
Socialism—The Divorce Bill.*

MARCH 2ND, 1920.—Dined with Pomeroy Burton.

Present : Lord Ashfield (Albert Stanley), J. H. Thomas, the Labour leader, Sir Joseph Davies, formerly a Cardiff accountant, now busily engaged in coal-mining and other trades, and Mr. Richards, a big builder and contractor.

J. H. Thomas spoke entertainingly of his friends, "Nancy" and "Waldorf" (Lord and Lady Astor). He also told an amusing story about Auckland Geddes. He said Geddes is an authority on anatomy. Some woman said to him, "All my features are pretty nearly perfect, but I am not good-looking. How is it?" "Auckland replied, 'They don't fit! That's the trouble!' A very neat retort," said J. H. Thomas.

Thomas said the "direct action" people were done, and were going to be beaten at the forthcoming Trade Union Congress by three million votes. He said, "I insisted on the question being put to the straight vote. I don't think Smillie will face the music. The trouble is that in the House of Commons most of the Labour leaders have no brains."

I said, "Unless the capitalist sections join forces, Labour is bound to make enormous headway at the polls." Thomas agreed with this. I said I doubted whether a Labour Government would do anything rash when they got into power.

J. H. THOMAS : No, you may be quite sure they will not. Responsibility has an extraordinary effect. Take my tip! If you want to calm a man down, put him on a committee or in the Cabinet. That will sap his vitality!

R. : A collision with facts is an awkward business. When you have no responsibility, you never need meet facts. You can always dodge them.

J. H. T. : When you are in power they hit you on the nose. That is why Governments always become so unpopular.

Thomas told us he had been consulted about housing and produced official figures. Richards said the delay was mainly due to labour, that the men would not work as they should, and would not agree to dilution. Thomas ascribed the delay to other reasons. Another member of the party agreed with me that finance was the chief cause of delay. Houses could not be built to pay an economic rent, and the Government would not face the problem. The figures we gave surprised J. H. Thomas.

6TH.—Spent the morning with L. G. and lunched with him at Cobham. We walked on the heath at the back of his house for an hour. He spoke of Russia. He strongly favours peace with the Russian Government. He said he had advocated this in Paris in February 1919. He expects that the representatives of the Russian Government will arrive in England at an early date to make arrangements regarding trade with Russia. I said, "Are they representatives of the co-operative societies or the Bolshevist Government?"

L. G. : The Soviet, undoubtedly.

Much talk by L. G. regarding Winston's proposal in the autumn of last year that he (W.) should visit Russia. That was when Denikin's chances seemed favourable. L. G. said he had strongly dissuaded W. from going, and that W. had been convinced by his arguments.

7TH (SUNDAY).—Golfed with L. G., returning to lunch and then on to Walton Heath to tea, as he and Mrs. L. G. were going to Beaverbrook's to see a cinema show and dine. Much talk of the political situation. The Liberal candidates at Stockport, Guest and others came to lunch to discuss the course to be adopted owing to the dispute between the two parties in the constituency. It seems Lord Salisbury has written a letter advising the Conservatives not to support a Lloyd George candidate. Consequently the political situation

is becoming more and more complicated. L. G. very angry at an attack upon him and his policies in the *Observer*.

R. : Your troubles are due to the fact that you have no proper party. You should go straight ahead, form your party and do what you think right and best for the nation. It is a mistake to spend so much thought and effort in trying to conciliate all these interests. It can't be done. If the result is that you have to resign, let resignation come, and let the other fellows try what they can do.

L. G. (who had been listening very attentively) : I agree with you. I must go straight ahead on the lines you indicate. That is my own opinion.

[The newspaper attacks are evidently causing him much concern, but they don't seem to interfere with his sleep. Last night he went to bed early and slept all night. This morning after breakfast he slept again for an hour, and in the afternoon for two hours. This is how he constantly recharges the dynamo. He can sleep almost at any time. The redoubtable Mr. Bottomley told me the other day that he too has this faculty, which he described as a priceless gift for a public man. And so it is, but a cynic might remark that many statesmen suffer from too much somnolence.]

Mrs. L. G. is very sensible. She says L. G. should declare himself and see what happens. What is the good of trying to conciliate everyone ?

20TH AND 21ST (SATURDAY AND SUNDAY).—Long talks with L. G. on the political situation. He said, "Was there any stage at which I could, with honour, have broken up the Coalition and thrown over my Conservative colleagues ? I cannot think of one. Now I should like some rest. For many reasons I should like to resign and take a good long holiday. But I feel there is work for me to do. Fate, Providence, or what you will, has ordained me for the purpose. It is my destiny and I must fulfil it."

[The truth is that he enjoys the life, arduous though it may be. The business man who has made all the money he really wants still labours on. He often feels tired and weary and comes to regard himself as a sort of business patriot. The same thing applies to statesmen. As a general rule they stay on because

they like the life, but they think the reason is undiluted patriotism. Human motives are so mixed that it is impossible to analyse them.]

L. G. says he thinks Asquith intends to go slow. He does not seem aggressive. He intends to bide his time in the hope that the Tories will get sick of L. G. and then combine with Mr. A.. L. G. added, "In the House of Commons the other night Mr. A. was very polite, especially when he saw me taking notes. He has no stomach for a real fight. He never had. He does not want me to begin to attack him." L. G. says that Bonar Law and the Conservatives are behind him (L. G.). The sympathies of some of them may not be in favour of his schemes, but they do what he wants, which is the important thing. We spoke of the Lord Chancellor (Birkenhead).

R. : He is a good speaker, and manages the Peers well, from what I have seen.

L. G. : He has a wonderful power of words.

R. : They drop into their places like a fine piece of mosaic work.

L. G. : Yes, that just describes it. I have never known anyone with that precise gift better developed.

R. : Gordon Hewart runs him very close.

L. G. : Yes, he has a marvellous gift for putting the right word in the right place.

The telephone bell rang. The Secretary at Downing Street to speak to L. G..

L. G. (returning) : A revolution has broken out in Germany. That may change everything. It is a military rising and may be royalist. Strangely the Bolsheviks in Russia sent us warning that a revolution would take place in Germany. They were asked to assist the revolutionary party but declined, as they said it was no part of their game to help to re-establish a monarchy in Germany.

L. G. said the French had helped to bring about the revolution by making and enforcing demands which had made the position of the German Government impossible.

I enquired whether he would make his speech to the Coalition Liberals this week as arranged. He said, "This



revolution changes everything. No one can say what will happen. I may have to postpone my speech."

I left L. G. on the Saturday at an early hour so that he might go to sleep. He is an indefatigable worker, week-day and Sunday. The preparation of his speeches is no small task. Usually they are carefully prepared and dictated to a shorthand writer. This he does on Sunday more often than not.

27TH.—The other day I talked with L. G. about travel.

L. G. : I confess I like to travel in comfort. When I entered Parliament, I used to travel up and down to Criccieth very frequently, once a week or once a fortnight. It was an awful journey. I used to travel by night, and well do I remember the hours I spent in a third-class carriage seated bolt upright. It was not so bad when you could put your feet up. Those memories make you appreciate your blessings.

Golfed with L. G., Reading and Sassoon at Walton Heath. L. G. and I thought Reading looked older. He seems to have lost some of his wonderful spring and vitality. He told me that he sees a good deal of Asquith. He says that Mr. A. talks as well as ever and greatly enjoys his social life. I enquired what was his plan of action. Reading doubted whether he had any thought-out plan. Had he failed at Paisley, he would have given up the fight most probably, but his victory has put fresh heart into him. Reading warned him against quarrelling with L. G., first before L. G. went to the War Office, and second before Mr. A. resigned. That was on the previous Friday, Saturday or Sunday. Reading did not mention the day. On the Monday he tried to see Mr. A. again—that was when he (A.) had changed his mind and policy. A. declined to see him. Reading says that Mr. A. is just as good a talker as ever, and greatly enjoys dining out with bridge to follow.

I drove to Cobham and dined with L. G. and his wife in the evening. He said that Asquith does not relish the fight which he sees may take place between him and L. G., who thinks that Asquith reckons that at the next election he will return with 150 members. He (A.) thinks that the Tories will be unable to get on without him and will form a Coalition in which he may become Prime Minister. L. G. was very pleased with the speech he made at the National Liberal Club,

particularly with the portions in which he described Runciman's Paris economic resolutions<sup>1</sup> as "ruins."

(Jack Seely has nicknamed Runciman "the alabaster statesman." R. is good-looking, with a very white face.)

Later the conversation turned on public speaking. L. G. said, laughing, "Pompous people who cannot attract the masses call those who can 'demagogues.' Mr. A. would not like that," he added, "because he knows the statement to be true."

I notice that L. G. is steadily veering over to the Tory point of view. He constantly refers to the great services rendered by captains of industry and defends the propriety of the large share of profits they take. He says one Leverhulme or Ellerman is worth more to the world than say 10,000 sea captains or 20,000 engine drivers, and should be remunerated accordingly. He wants to improve the world and the condition of the people, but wants to do it in his own way.

He seems convinced that Socialism is a mistaken policy. I have observed this conviction growing upon him during the past four years. His point of view has entirely changed.

His courage and resource are remarkable. He has a nice kettle of fish to deal with just now. He made two big speeches this week. He has a threatened coal strike on hand. He is going to London to-morrow evening to attend a Cabinet meeting to decide what is to be done. Next week he has to speak on the second reading of the Home Rule Bill. He telephoned me earlier in the week to ask me what I thought the colliers intended to do. I told him my views, and also told him that I thought Mr. A.'s speech required an answer and a straight one. He had been rather doubtful about this, so I had heard.

We talked of the French attacks upon our policy. L. G. said that Millerand was navigating a very frail boat in a rough sea infested with sharks—Briand and others. The situation

<sup>1</sup>These resolutions, drawn up in June 1916, while Mr. Runciman was President of the Board of Trade, had the effect not only of boycotting enemy goods and labour during the war, but proposed to discriminate against the trade of enemy powers after the war and prohibit or restrict imports to enemy countries. They were signed by France, Belgium, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Russia and Serbia, and approved by the British Government within a month.

is thus made more difficult. L. G. would prefer to have dealt with Briand direct rather than to negotiate with a Minister who is all the time at Briand's mercy. L. G. said that Wilson has mismanaged the Fiume negotiation and that the outcome is obscure. Meanwhile the Italians are in possession. The Peace Conference is to be resumed at San Remo, and I am to go with the British Mission to represent the Press.

We spoke of the Divorce Bill. L. G. thought it too moderate and that divorce should be permitted for incompatibility of temper. I said that public opinion is not ripe for such a drastic change and that I thought the Bill went far enough. L. G. agreed that the public were not yet ready for such a measure, but said he felt strongly that the law should be altered as he indicated. "Why," he asked, "should two unhappy people be chained together for three years?"

R. : If people marry, they must be prepared to submit to some inconvenience if they find they have made a mistake.

L. G. : I don't agree with you ! Why should people submit to unhappinesses which are avoidable ? There are quite enough that cannot be avoided.

31ST.—Dined at Sassoon's with L. G. and others. L. G. said that Asquith made a poor speech on the Home Rule Bill.

## Chapter XXII

*The Conference moves to San Remo—An alternative League of Nations—Curzon on his dispute with Kitchener—His criticism of the new Delhi—French Militarists active—Troops for the Ruhr—The Entente in danger.*

APRIL 1ST, 1920.—An amusing conversation took place when I last saw L. G.. We were talking of some poor wretch who had embezzled money.

L. G. : One of the truest sayings ever uttered was that of Richard Baxter, who remarked, when he saw a criminal going to the gallows, " There, but for the grace of God, goes Richard Baxter ! " I always feel like that. I am a wretched hand at keeping accounts. I am sure that if my brother had not joined me in business, I should have got it into an awful muddle.

10TH.—Left for San Remo with L. G., to attend the Peace Conference. I go to represent the British Press as before. We travelled by sea to Marseilles on the S.S. *Naldera*. At sea until the following Friday. Not much to record except a terribly rough passage through the Bay of Biscay. L. G. much pleased with the results of the by-elections, which were sent by wireless.

L. G. : The results prove that the Government is not unpopular. It is all nonsense to say that it is.

R. : I put the Coalition successes down to three causes : 1. Your speech at the National Liberal Club; 2. Asquith's failure in the House of Commons to fulfil expectations, and 3. Greater unity of action between the Coalition Liberals and the Conservatives.

L. G. : Yes, I agree. They liked my speech. The Briton is a fighting man. He likes a fighting speech. Politics is his football match. My reference to pompous persons gave great satisfaction.

In the course of another conversation, L. G. remarked, " What the country needs to-day is a great religious movement.

All classes are too selfish and greedy. They are not thinking of the country. They are thinking only of themselves."

I (R.) doubted whether any great religious revival would occur, or, if it did, whether it would affect the conditions of which he complained. In the course of years a new civic ideal might arise, but it would be of slow growth.

[I thought, but did not say, that he, in common with all rulers, would welcome a movement that would make his task easier. A world in which all classes are struggling for what they conceive to be their rights is an uncomfortable place for rulers who want to settle social problems in their own way and prefer a docile, grateful people.]

I referred to the vivid interest of the younger members of the Labour Party in books, and to their desire for information.

L. G. says Montagu is keen to become Viceroy of India. L. G. does not approve. He said that in 1916, before the split, Montagu came to him and said he felt sure the Government would not last. He wished to know whether L. G. would serve in a new Ministry under Mr. A.. L. G. replied that he did not know that the Government was in jeopardy, but that he would serve in any Government except one of which a statesman whom he named was a member.

Many interesting talks with Hankey, who said that in his opinion the Battle of the Marne was the turning point of the war. I asked him why Bulgaria caved in. Was the collapse in the East due to military operations in that area, or to the break up of the Germans in the West? Hankey answered that this was one of the most interesting questions in the war. In his opinion the Bulgarians sued for peace because they thought that Germany was done. No doubt they were told that by the American Ambassador at Belgrade, and got the same impression from other sources. I said, "The historical reputation of the Easterners depends in some measure upon the answer to that question." Hankey agreed. He said that he had the question carefully investigated and dealt with in the official history of the war. He told me that he himself had drawn up a scheme for a league of nations. His idea was that the Supreme Council should be maintained in a modified form. He was opposed to the formation of a body which would have no direct connection

with actualities. For that reason he declined the Secretaryship of the League which was offered to him. He fears that the League in its present form is doomed to failure. He thinks that in some way the League should now be brought into direct touch with the Supreme Council, so that gradually the League may assume some of the Council's functions and ultimately replace it as the peace-maker of the world.

Many talks with Curzon—a most complicated and interesting personality—vain but witty, amusing and extremely well-informed. He is a tremendous worker—writes most of his letters with his own hand. He sits up working every morning until 3 or 3.30, writing despatches, minutes, etc.. While he has been here (San Remo) he has nearly killed his secretaries by robbing them of their sleep.

He spoke bitterly about Kitchener, whom he described as unscrupulous. He said that K. would wangle facts to suit himself. I said I had not come into contact with this trait in his character. I had always found him straightforward in his dealings. C. went on to say that when he had his great dispute with K. in India, C. was surprised that all the papers at home were against him. Subsequently a military writer called to see him, and told him that he had engineered the whole thing for K.. He (the writer) said he was now convinced that K. was in the wrong, and that he would be glad to repair the damage by engineering a similar agitation for C.. C. said that the writer was a man of position, well-known in military circles and that he had no doubt his allegations were true. He added that, contrary to etiquette, K. had written a letter to the Cabinet over his head. C. tried to get a copy of this, but found that all copies had been called in or destroyed. One day Moberly Bell, manager of *The Times*, called upon him and said that although *The Times* had been taking up an unfriendly attitude, he, Moberly Bell, thought that C. was in the right and in his personal capacity had come to tell him so. He further said that he would be glad to help C. if he could. C. then mentioned the letter and said he had been unable to get a copy of it. Moberly Bell put his hand into his pocket, and, pulling out a paper, said, "Well, there you are !"

"It was a most malicious document," said Curzon.

Curzon told me that he attributed his success in life to hard work. He said, "I have always worked hard. You can do nothing without hard work. My ancestors have held Kedleston for 900 years, father and son, but none of them ever distinguished himself. They were just ordinary country gentlemen—M.P.s, Sheriffs, and so on. I made up my mind I would try to get out of the groove. My old father, who was brought up as a clergyman and got the title by accident when he was twenty-three, owing to a relative's sudden death, had no sympathy with my aspirations. He said, 'Why don't you stop at home and be quiet, and look after the estate, and take an interest in the tenants, as I have done, instead of roaming about all over the world?' I don't believe that my father ever read one of my books or speeches, and he took very little interest in any success I achieved. He thought that a man's duty was to stop at home and look after the people around him. I always took an interest in the East and, as you know, travelled widely. Someone said to me in early life, 'Why are you so interested in the East?' I answered, 'Well, it is my ambition to become Viceroy of India, but I should not care for the post unless I got it before I was forty!' This caused a laugh, and I am bound to say that I laughed at myself. Strangely I became Viceroy six days before I was forty. Lord Salisbury gave me the job. I was then Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs. When he mentioned it, I said, 'The Queen will never agree!' He said, 'On the contrary, she will agree to no one else. She has heard how interested you are in the East, and thinks you a most suitable person!' The Viceroy of India occupies a wonderful position. People at home don't understand the nature and extent of his powers. When in India I did things that will stand for hundreds of years—things that will be a monument of my rule. I saw when I was there that all the beautiful old buildings and monuments had fallen into disrepair and were gradually crumbling away. I got a grant and set to work to rehabilitate them. Now they are in fine order, and although I have left India they allow me to be responsible for them. They will give pleasure to millions and I am proud that I have had any hand in the transaction.

"I take a great interest in architecture. I have bought several places of historic interest in Great Britain, which I have

repaired, and which I have left to the nation in my will with an endowment. I have taken Montacute, a beautiful old house which I have renovated. I only have a lease of it, but that I don't mind. If you renovate a beautiful house, it does not matter that it will pass from your family. You are preserving a lovely thing for the nation."

He spoke in strong terms against the new Delhi. He said it was a mistake to segregate the ruling class from the people, with whom they are not sufficiently in touch as it is. Now they go to Calcutta every year, and thus get into touch with trade, commerce, etc.. But when Delhi is established these visits will be abandoned. C.'s powers of description are brilliant. He gave a most admirable account of some of the Indian mosques and other buildings.

19TH.—The Peace Conference opened formally. Many rumours concerning fresh disputes between the French on the one hand and the British and Italians on the other. Long talks with L. G., Kerr and Hankey. All very critical of the French, their view being that the military party, headed by Foch, are struggling hard to force Millerand<sup>1</sup> to take up the position that if France's allies will not support her in military measures to coerce the Germans, France should act on her own account. Many rumours are current as to French intentions. Some say the French wish to occupy and exploit the Ruhr coalfields, as they are now satisfied that the Germans will pay nothing by way of indemnity. Henry Wilson told me that in his opinion the recent action of the French in sending troops to the Ruhr was justified in substance and essence, but wrong in form, and that the action of the British and Italians was wrong in substance and essence but right in form. He said further that "the Frocks" (the politicians) are in an awkward mess. They have not taken charge of events, so events are taking charge of them. They have prematurely disbanded their armies and now they are powerless to enforce their views. Regarding Germany and France, the time has come when we must decide what course we are going to take. The French, and Foch in particular, see clearly, and have a definite plan of action. We have none. We can no longer shirk a decision. We must decide

<sup>1</sup> The French President, 1920-24.



whether we intend to compel the Germans by force, or a show of force, to perform their obligations or whether we intend to treat them as friends and brothers, the latter alternative involving, in some measure, waiving certain parts of the Peace Treaty. L. G. asked me to ascertain for him what the French view was. From journalists in touch with the French, I obtained confirmation of the rumours stated above. I communicated this to L. G., who said, "I regard the position as one of extreme gravity. Foch, Barrère, and others are endeavouring to get Millerand to adopt a militarist policy which will be fraught with great danger to our country. I am leading counsel for Great Britain, and, as such, must watch her interests. Unless we are careful, events may happen in the course of the next few weeks which may seriously affect our welfare and perhaps our existence during the next twenty-five years. I must look ahead in the interests of our country, and unless I did so, I could not have an easy conscience."

21ST.—Further talk with L. G. regarding the French situation. I told him I proposed to send in code a warning message to editors, the purport of which I indicated.

Much of my time has been occupied in settling with Reuters' representative the terms of his message to England—a difficult task.

22ND.—HENRY WILSON : We had three hours of it this afternoon, discussing naval and military measures to enforce the Turkish Treaty. We were all there—Foch, Beatty and the Frocks. The poor Frocks! They are in a terrible state. They don't know what to do. To-day they did nothing—practically nothing. At the end Nitti enquired, "Is there any other question?" And then George Nathaniel Curzon lifted up his voice, and said, "Many questions have been asked already, but none has been answered!" That was too much for poor Mr. Nitti. He at once closed the sitting. Foch said to me, "C'est pitoyable!" ("It is pitiable!"). It is politics, politics, politics, all the time. We told them we were all agreed (but then we are only poor soldiers!) that they would require twenty-four divisions to enforce the Treaty as drafted. That was a horrible shock for them.

23RD and 24TH.—A terrible hullabaloo about the

Anglo-French situation. Intensified rumours of disagreement between L. G. and Nitti on the one hand and Millerand on the other. It is said that L. G. and Nitti proposed that the Germans should be sent for with a view to a conference. I invited L. G. to meet the British Press and subsequently arranged for him to meet the American Press. He said in effect that he did not regard the Germans as contumacious but thought the German Government weak and unable to enforce its commands. He compared it to a paralysed body. He also indicated his fears of a French military policy. At the same time it is obvious that he hopes for an arrangement with the French. He feels that public opinion will not tolerate any breach in the alliance. Last night he had Millerand to dinner. To-night (23rd) Foch dines with him and to-morrow (24th) he dines with Millerand.

24TH.—History of Publicity at San Remo.

On the first day of the Conference I went with L. G. to the Villa de Vachan, where a preliminary discussion was to take place. After the meeting, Hankey came on to the terrace with the draft *communiqué* as to the day's proceedings written in pencil. The last clause read, "A daily *communiqué* will be issued, but beyond this no information as to the proceedings of the Conference will be published," or words to that effect. I said, "I have no right to speak, but I venture to describe that as a most ill-advised statement. The rule will not be kept, and the Conference will once more become a laughing-stock." L. G. and Curzon were there. I reminded them of what took place at the first Conference in 1919. L. G. and Hankey were not pleased at my intervention, but eventually the offending words were deleted, Hankey saying, as they were struck out, "Whether the words go in or not, there is the resolution which they have just passed." Later I told the correspondents of the resolution, and that I proposed to make a strong protest. Later I saw L. G. and told him that the French and Italians would not follow the rule and that the British journalists would be compelled to secure their information from foreign sources. I also said that I felt strongly disposed to cable the Newspaper Proprietors' Association suggesting that the newspapers should recall their correspondents as a protest.

L. G. said he thought Kerr might give me information as

he did on previous occasions. When I repeated this to Hankey, he laughed and remarked, "L. G. made the proposal, and now he is the first to break it." [The resolution of a week ago has been observed by no one and has proved a complete farce.]

Millerand and L. G. had a long, satisfactory interview this morning at the Hôtel Royal. They are to prepare a joint declaration making recommendations to the Conference. Both parties ascribe all the trouble to the newspapers ! Little is said concerning the fundamental difference between the points of view which led to the discussion. The French regard the Germans as a beaten enemy who should be treated as such. The official British point of view is that the German nation were not responsible for the war, that the Junkers have been ejected, that the German Government should be supported, that German industries should be revived and that, generally, the Germans should not be regarded with suspicion. Whatever may be L. G.'s views to-day, there is no doubt that when he arrived here he was very anti-French, that is, suspicious of French military tendencies and designs. I believe the British people feel that every reasonable effort must be made to maintain the French alliance. L. G. knows my views and is not pleased.

At lunch to-day—present, L. G., Curzon and Arthur Balfour—some good talk. L. G. described Millerand as perhaps the most sincere politician he had ever met, "which," he said, laughing, "is high praise for any man." I said, "The dinners with Foch and Millerand have proved useful—more so than the formal conferences."

L. G. : Yes, there is no doubt about that. When Millerand dined with me we talked about all sorts of things till the last three-quarters of an hour and then we came to the real business and did good work.

SAN REMO, 1920.—The conversation turned on Parliamentary speaking. Balfour said that what you want in the House of Commons is a man who can be relied upon to make a good speech on any occasion. A man who can make occasional brilliant speeches but is not reliable is not such a Parliamentary asset as a competent reliable speaker whose standard is always high. L. G. and Curzon both took the same view.

All three agreed that the art of debate had fallen to a very low level in the House of Commons. "There are no efficient debaters among the younger men," they said.

The merits of different speakers were discussed. They all agreed as to Winston's oratorical gifts. "But," remarked L. G., "he sometimes ends by blowing up his own guns. You never feel quite safe until he has sat down!"

Referring to L. G.'s interviews with Millerand, Foch and Nitti, which are conducted through the medium of an interpreter, all three agreed that it was easier to conduct negotiations in this way than by means of direct speech. The breaks give more time for thought. L. G. said he had been the first person to initiate the use of an interpreter in conferences with the French. He could not speak in French and could not rely upon understanding what the French representatives said. Asquith used to speak in French, but the effect was to make his statements too brief. Consequently, L. G. urged the appointment of an interpreter. They all agreed that Camerlynck, who has been interpreting at this conference, was as good as Mantoux.

L. G. told a good story of Hughes at the Peace Conference. "Do I understand," said President Wilson, when dealing with the Mandate question, "that Australia in the face of the wishes of the world would insist upon having her own way?" Thereupon Hughes, with his hand to his ear (he is very deaf), remarked, "Yes, that's about it!"—an answer which so flabbergasted the President that he did not continue the discussion.

L. G. related an interview he had with Botha in 1907 or thereabouts. "As I had been a pro-Boer," said L. G., "he was confidential with me. He said, 'Having taken the King's shilling, I shall stand by the British Empire. You can rely on me whatever happens. I fought them hard and shall be equally loyal now that I am on their side,' and he proved so."

L. G. again gave a dramatic account of Botha's great speech at the Peace Conference. President Wilson told me (R.) that it was one of the most moving, dramatic and effective speeches he had ever heard.

In talking of Smuts, L. G. said, "Smuts made a great mistake in not accepting command in Palestine, which we

offered him. The conquest of Palestine would have been an historic feat of arms. We pressed him to take it, but he would not. He was afraid of old Robertson. All the same, I think Smuts was wrong, and that he could have held his own with 'Wullie.' We told him, 'Come direct to us and we will see you through.' Smuts said, 'No ! I don't believe you could !' "

General Wilson gave me an interesting account of Foch. He said, "Foch possesses qualities which are not possessed by any other soldier I have ever met. Of course he is well versed in the art of war. He has been well trained and has read widely. He has devoted himself exclusively to his profession. He has had no other interests. But beyond that he has an uncanny instinct as to the right thing to be done. He cannot always give you reasons. I think he reasons up to a point and then takes a leap to the conclusion. He jumps over hills and valleys, but he always lands in the right place. I remember that two years ago this month we all met together, five of us, British and French, including Foch and myself. The position was very serious. Foch wanted to do a certain thing. We all opposed him. His proposals involved the lives of thousands of British troops, so we had a great responsibility. He heard what we had to say, but declined to alter his opinion. He proved right. We were wrong. That is typical of the man. He is the most courageous man I have ever met, and the greatest fighter. He is never done, and you never know when he will spring up at you again."

## Chapter XXIII

*War madness in France and Poland—The future of the Labour Party—Millerand comes to Hythe—Reparations—the question of priority—L. G. on “interference” with the generals—His opinion of Lenin and Krassin—Taxation of War Profits.*

LYMPNE, KENT : MAY 9TH, 1920.—At Sassoon's from Saturday to Monday afternoon, with L. G. and Mrs. L. G.. Sassoon was away. The P.M. has not been well. He caught a bad cold when passing through Paris by standing on the platform talking to Derby. He is also a bit run down—so Dawson, his doctor, told me. As a result his pulse is running up to 100. The doctor says he requires rest. L. G. told me that he had asked Millerand to put off the meeting at Spa with the Germans until after the German elections, as it was not worth while to meet in conference a Government which might be turned out in a few days. Millerand agreed, and the question was as to the desirability of putting forward a joint request.

L. G. : There are two nations in Europe who have gone rather mad, the French and the Poles. Unless the Poles are careful they will revive and intensify the spirit of Russian nationality.<sup>1</sup> Nothing can do this more effectively than arrogance on the part of foreigners. The Poles are inclined to be arrogant and they will have to take care that they don't get their heads punched. The French are actually proposing that we should not meet the Germans on equal terms. They want us to say to them, “There are our proposals. Make your answer !” That is not what I call a conference.

R. : Of course it cannot be a conference on equal terms, as I understand the Treaty is to be enforced.

L. G. : Yes, it is just the same as if a solicitor were to go into conference with the representative of a person who had

<sup>1</sup>The Poles, in their advance into Russia, had just succeeded in occupying Kiev.

made an agreement with his client, with a view to considering how the agreement should be carried out. He would commence the proceedings by saying, "I cannot discuss any alteration in the agreement. The conference must proceed on the basis of the document as it stands. I am prepared to discuss the method of giving effect to the provisions of the agreement and also any questions which have been left over by the document for subsequent discussion between the parties as to details." That is a very different thing from declining to discuss a subject. I shall not attend a conference unless we can have a discussion. It is only by means of a discussion that we can ascertain whether the Germans intend to carry out the Treaty. It is useless for us to say, "Our proposals are so and so." We might just as well send the proposals in writing. However, I have no doubt we shall come to some agreement with the French as to procedure.

Much talk about politics.

R. : Did you notice the small poll at the Sunderland Election (Hamar Greenwood elected)? Only about fifty per cent.. I think Trade Unionists are not taking the trouble to vote. They are getting what they want—shorter hours, higher wages, better conditions, by other means. There is no great political issue that interests them.

L. G. : Yes, I am strongly of that opinion. Otherwise Labour would sweep the country. They have no leader and their policy does not differ from mine except as to nationalisation. Hodges (the South Wales miners' leader) has a clear mind and puts his points clearly. He also has imagination and personality.

R. : I agree. What a panorama life is ! He used to write articles for me at the rate of 10s. 6d. a column. Hartshorn introduced him. How about J. H. Thomas ?

L. G. : He is very clever. I am lost in admiration of the things he does and does not do. But he is uneducated, and I am not sure that a man who drops his aitches and makes other grammatical blunders can lead this country. At the same time he is a force and a very dexterous politician. The future of the Labour Party is interesting. In certain eventualities, Asquith or Robert Cecil will try to link up with them.

SIGNATURE OF MR. LLOYD GEORGE'S DOG CYMRO IN  
VISITORS' BOOK AT DANNY PARK (see *War Diary*)

The handwriting is that of Mr. Lloyd George



R. : Do you think the Labour Party will link up with anybody ?

L. G. : Well, a time comes when political parties grow weary of waiting. That is the dangerous time. Your Hodges, Hendersons and Hartshorns will be growing older. They may think that although the prospects of their party are bright, there is little chance of coming into power for some years. In other words, they may feel that they personally will never inherit the promised land they have helped to create. That may make them willing to effect a union which will give them immediate power. Then, of course, they would run the risk of entanglements which would modify their programme.

In talking of novels I said, " Have you ever read Joseph Conrad's books ? "

L. G. : Yes, but I don't care for them. They always end gloomily. I have no use for novels with sad endings.

15TH.—To Hythe, to attend a conference between the British and French missions. Chief British representatives, L. G. and Austen Chamberlain. Chief French representatives, Millerand and Marsal, French Minister of Commerce.

The conference took place at Sassoon's house at Lympne. He entertained the party. The French arrived on Friday evening and left midday on Sunday. They have been very busy trying to induce the English Press to support the French claim for priority in respect of devastated areas. I telephoned informing Kerr of this. I said that the Government Press arrangements in connection with foreign affairs require re-organisation. The Press will not take a line from Downing Street, as they always suspect political motives. By tradition the information should come from the Foreign Office, and journalists are glad to hear the F.O. point of view. The F.O. people say they are not kept informed and do not themselves know what the Government's point of view is. Whether this is due to Curzon's neglect to inform them, or whether he does not always know the P.M.'s mind, I cannot say, but the result is deplorable. On this occasion the French have carefully primed not only their own, but the British newspapers, whereas we have done nothing to explain the Government attitude on the subjects to be discussed at the conference. Kerr agreed, and

said he had arranged in future to keep the F.O. Press Department informed. The French are very communicative with their Press. During the conferences Millerand personally sees the Havas representative every day and sometimes two or three times a day, in addition to which the minor officials tell the newspapers, directly or indirectly, practically everything that occurs. On the other hand, the information supplied by our mission is very scrappy, and often one has to fight for it.

I found L. G. evidently far from well. He said that during the first few days he was at Hythe he was really feeling very cheap. Dawson has advised him to go slow and take another week or ten days' holiday.

This was the most informal conference I have seen. Most of the talking was done by Millerand and L. G. when walking about the grounds. On Saturday afternoon five cinema operators were vainly waiting for their chance. Cambon was in attendance, but for the most part he stayed mewed up in the library with a book.

The entertainment was on a lavish scale, the meals being prepared by two French chefs. Sassoon is a thin, dark man of medium height who has made hospitality an art. He is a restless creature, and flitted about from room to room, and person to person, like a bee in search of honey.

Derby is much shrewder than appears from his bluff John Bull manner—very observant and a good judge of character. He has been seeing Northcliffe and Wickham Steed, with a view to impressing upon them the inadvisability of continuing to attack the P.M.. I think his intervention is having some effect. In the course of conversation he told me many interesting things about his ancestors ancient and modern. The family dates back to 1066. What he said about the beginnings of the Derby at Epsom was specially entertaining.

Austen Chamberlain is a shrewd, capable Minister and although he looks superior is nothing of the sort. Indeed, he is modest, affable and kindly. He worked hard during the conference, and L. G. thanked him for what he had done. The sum total of the deliberations was that the French claim for priority was disallowed, but it was agreed that the French

should pay us *pari passu* with the receipt by them of their share of the indemnity from the Germans, Millerand agreeing to fix a definite sum for the indemnity.

I lunched and dined at Sassoon's on Sunday. After dinner, L. G., Chamberlain, and I talked of the Conference. I said the Press had received the settlement quite well, and that I had been careful to explain that neither party had won a victory in the negotiations. In the afternoon L. G. had asked me to be careful when making my statement to the Press not to emphasise that Millerand had not got what he wanted.

L. G. : The French did not get what they wanted. They did not get much.

R. : Well they took something back !

L. G. : They were very disappointed.

CHAMBERLAIN : Yes, they certainly took something back with them.

L. G. shook his head and went off to bed.

My statement to the Press was based on what Chamberlain said in the afternoon. He gave a lucid explanation of the memorandum.

Bonar Law came down to lunch. He said Foch told him that he considered the most remarkable thing in the war the rehabilitation of the British Army in March 1918.

At dinner there was a long discussion on the perennial topic of the respective merits of soldiers, sailors and civilians in the war. Chamberlain said he had met Sherman, the American general in the Civil War, and had asked him how he would place General Grant as a soldier. Sherman had thought a while and then said, "It was necessary to sacrifice a lot of lives and Grant was the man to do it." L. G. then referred to Lincoln's interference with the generals, and I mentioned the letter which Grant wrote to Lincoln in which he said that he would not continue to act unless he was not interfered with. This led to a discussion on the relations between the sailors and soldiers on the one hand and the civilians on the other in the recent war.

L. G. : We never interfered with the soldiers in the field.

CHAMBERLAIN : That is quite true. The Cabinet memorandum with regard to Passchendaele is significant. The

Cabinet said they thought the operation would not succeed, and gave their reasons, but said the responsibility rested with the soldiers, and if they decided on the operation the Cabinet would support them.

L. G. : Civilians' suggestions bore good fruit—Salonika, Palestine, the unified command and my suggestions in regard to Italy. When I went to Rome in January 1917, I foretold that the Russians would be wiped out and that an attack would be made on the Italian Front. I suggested that plans should be prepared to support the Italians. This was done, but Robertson and our people were not enthusiastic. However, these plans saved the situation when the time came.

CHAMBERLAIN : I always thought Robertson had no imagination. He simply worked from text-books.

In the afternoon, L. G., Bonar Law, Austen Chamberlain, Hankey and Kerr had a conference with General Malcolm, who holds a sort of roving commission for the British Government in Berlin.

L. G. (to Malcolm) : You had better let the Germans know what our view is. They must disarm and they must pay. But subject to that we are in favour of rehabilitating Germany. In fact Germany must be rehabilitated if she is going to pay. What is the French attitude to the Germans ?

GENERAL MALCOLM : It varies, but in many respects the French are unnecessarily harsh and objectionable. For example, the other day a French officer refused to take his hat off in the church which contains the tomb of Frederick the Great. That caused a good deal of ill-feeling.

L. G., Bonar Law, and Chamberlain all disapproved of the action of the Frenchman.

L. G. : There is no doubt that the French have strong military aspirations. They want to revive the Napoleonic ideal.

CHAMBERLAIN : In my opinion the French are not acting from malevolence. Their action is dictated by funk. They think that if the Germans once get their heads up, they will advance at a much greater rate than the French, and will thus become a new menace to France.

L. G. did not agree with this, but Chamberlain kept to his point.

I lunched with L. G. on the Monday. He said, "Who told the newspapers that we were not to get paid unless the French got paid by Germany? We never agreed to that!"

I referred him to the official memorandum issued which uses the word "parallel" and told him what Chamberlain had said. He then remarked, "Well of course we shall never get anything from the French. It is like lending money to a friend. You cannot get it back again."

I said, "Which would you sooner possess—a debt of £450 millions from France or £1,250 millions from Germany?"

L. G. : £1,250 millions from Germany. We shall never be able to collect money from France.

(It remains to be seen whether our people made a good arrangement. It is difficult to see how the Germans are going to produce sufficient commodities to make any substantial payments for some time.)

I attended a meeting in the Lord Chancellor's room at which the Lord Chancellor, Lord Buckmaster, Lord Burnham and others were present, the object being to consider what steps should be taken to press the Divorce Bill forward in the Commons. Buckmaster strongly urged that the Government should adopt the Bill. F. E. and I both said we were sure they would not do so, but I suggested that F. E. should get the Government to give time for the Bill. This he promised to do.

23RD.—At Cobham to dinner. L. G. better but still rather shaky. The strain has told on him at last and he needs rest. He was at a Cabinet Meeting during the week. He said it was a difficult Cabinet and he had to attend. He spoke of a dispatch sent by Curzon, the tone of which had made him very angry. He described it as a pompous and dangerous document and said he should speak strongly to Curzon about it. He again referred to the Poles. I told him I had spent an hour with Prince Sapieha, the Ambassador. L. G. prophesied that the Poles would suffer a severe defeat.

28TH.—To Gopsall, Leicestershire, with Burnham and Northcliffe, to open the Printers' Sanatorium. Northcliffe very friendly as usual. He does not look well. He says he suffers from a cough and cannot stand the damp. He has grown very stout. When speaking I facetiously complained that there was

no golf course on which newspaper proprietors could play when they had taken refuge in the Home, owing to high wages, cost of paper, etc.. This amused Burnham and Northcliffe. I feel very sorry to see N. so much under the weather in regard to his health. He is very plucky about it, but evidently thinks he is seriously ill.

30TH.—Dined with L. G. at Cobham. Present : Lord and Lady Lee, Lord Dawson, Miss Stevenson and Captain Evans. Much talk of Lenin and Krassin<sup>1</sup> the Russian representative whom L. G. is to meet to-morrow to discuss a trade agreement. L. G. said that Lenin is the biggest man in politics. He had conceived and carried out a great economic experiment. It looked as if it were a failure. If so, Lenin was a big enough man to confess the truth and face it. He would modify his plans and govern Russia by other methods. In his (L. G.'s) opinion, Communism was doomed to failure as it ignored some of the most important qualities of human nature. At the same time it had to be tried and he did not object to the experiment so long as it was not tried here ! The British working-classes did not really believe in the Russian experiment but did not wish it to be interfered with. They regarded it as a democratic movement which should have fair play from all democracies. The innate feeling of the Briton is that foreigners, and especially Russians, are queer devils who engage in all sorts of strange practices. Krassin is a capable man. L. G. proposes to tell him that all Bolshevik propaganda in Persia, Afghanistan, etc. must be stopped as a preliminary to negotiations. L. G. thinks Lenin will agree. Trotsky, according to L. G., is a great organiser. As a rule L. G. is very cocksure in his estimates of men. He is usually right but now and again makes a bloomer.

We spoke again of the Poles. L. G. still thinks they will be beaten. He told us that in Paris in December the Polish delegation brought him a large map in which they indicated the territories they regarded as essential to Poland—"a most preposterous claim" said L. G.. "The Poles have quarrelled with all their neighbours, and they are a menace to the peace of Europe." When the Prime Minister of Poland came to see

<sup>1</sup>d. 1927.

him, L. G. warned him of the dangers of offensive measures against Russia and that Great Britain could not support the Poles. This L. G. thought it well to repeat in writing.

(Prince Sapieha confirmed L. G.'s account of the interview.)

L. G. wanted Bonar Law to tell the whole story to the House of Commons, but he did not do so. "It will have to be told," said L. G.. In answer to a question from Lee, L. G. said that the action of the Poles had consolidated Russian nationalism. The Germans suspended our party system which had been in operation for 300 years. The Prussians consolidated France after the Revolution. Now the same thing was taking place in Russia. Russians of all classes were joining hands to defend Russian territory. They might fight between themselves concerning the way in which Russia should be governed, but were united in opposition to foreign aggression with the object of annexing Russian territory.

An amusing discussion took place about doctors.

L. G. : I am opposed to the prosecution of the unregistered practitioner. If a patient chooses to consult an unregistered man and suffers in consequence, that is the patient's affair. The public have a shrewd idea that many of these men have the gift of healing.

Lord Dawson naturally did not relish this point of view.

L. G. : You will have to improve the education and discipline of medical students. They have no corporate life. While I was dealing with the Insurance Act I had much to do with doctors. I found them unreasonable and unruly.

It was easy to see that these strictures did not meet with Lord D.'s approval. It would have been surprising if they had. I don't know whether he appreciates that anyone who opposes L. G. on a matter in which he is keenly interested, and who puts up a big fight, must expect unfavourable criticism. If you refuse his medicine he thinks that your unreasonable conduct must be due to some other reason than the honest belief that the physic is not good for you.

We talked of the taxation of war profits.

R. : I see the Cabinet have decided against the scheme. Beaverbrook says you and Montagu favour it, but that Bonar Law is against it.

L. G. : I don't know that Bonar is against it. I am in favour of it if any substantial sum of money will be produced. But I am opposed to a scheme that will produce only a small sum and may seriously disorganise credit.

R. : Perhaps it would be a measure of insurance, as Chamberlain said in his speech in the House of Commons, but you have left it too late, I am afraid. You have let these profiteers slip through your fingers. The people feel that while they made enormous sacrifices in the war a few favoured individuals made great fortunes. Obviously that is unjust and should not have been permitted. It will bear evil fruit.

L. G. : If we imposed these taxes and a financial crisis ensued with unemployment in its train we should be blamed, not because we imposed the taxes but because we had done something else which had produced the crisis.

Then we turned to L. G.'s favourite topic—his troubles as Minister of Munitions. He gave in his best form a vivid account of several incidents. His account of his weekly meetings with the staff and his cross-examination of the various members was most entertaining. He said they strongly objected to being questioned before each other. He gave a graphic account of how the pins in three hundred fuses were wrongly inserted, it was believed by a Norwegian in one of the works. Had not this been discovered a number of guns would have been destroyed, many men killed and the *morale* of the artillery prejudiced. After much trouble the faulty fuses were retrieved.



## Chapter XXIV

*Conditions in Ireland—Lord French urges martial law—Lenin's letter to the Labour Party—Serious developments in Turkey—More conferences at Hythe and Boulogne—An eye-witness from Russia—Why L. G. backed the Greeks.*

JUNE 2ND, 1920.—To reception at Bonar Law's—occasion, marriage of his daughter to Sykes,<sup>1</sup> the flying man. Bonar remarked that the function had not proved so trying as he had expected, but said he was very tired, having to stand to receive so many people and that, although he looked fairly well, he was not well. He wanted a rest. He is always pessimistic.

I said, laughing, "There are a lot of people who would like to give you a rest, but they can't get rid of you!"

"No," answered Bonar, "as long as L. G. and I are working together, I don't think they will. He is certain to find some means of keeping in!"

Afterwards went into No. 10. L. G. appeared, looking very spick and span and apparently quite recovered from his illness. Derby was there, having just returned from the Derby, where his horse ran second. He said that he was going to see Northcliffe about a fund for bringing over French soldiers as visitors to Great Britain—"Not a political visit!" he remarked. L. G. gave us a curious look, and said with much bitterness that he resented Northcliffe's attitude regarding the relationship between Britain and France, which was calculated to stir up strife. Then he went off to the House of Commons to make a presentation to Miss Bonar Law.

5TH.—Golfed with L. G. at Walton Heath. He said he was much better for the round. He said Asquith had made a sorry show. He had never been accustomed to fight with a small number of followers behind him. He had been accustomed to rise with a burst of applause from his supporters.

<sup>1</sup>Now Maj.-Gen. the Rt. Hon. Sir Frederick Sykes; Controller General of Civil Aviation, 1919-22.

Now there were but few cheers and he had to address a huge unfriendly mass of opponents. In the old days all the fighting had been done by L. G., Winston and others. Mr. A. had never been a regular attendant at the House of Commons.

6TH (SUNDAY).—To dinner with L. G. at Cobham as usual. Lord St. Davids and General Tudor<sup>1</sup> were there. Tudor is now head of the police force in Ireland—General Macready's right-hand man. He seems determined and capable, but told me that the life is wearing. He had to drive about with a revolver across his knees and never knew when he might be shot at. He gave the P.M. a vivid description of prevailing conditions. He said the Irish Constabulary were rattled. Many were elderly men, and, owing to the necessity for constant vigilance, the members of the force stationed in country districts got very little sleep. He was adding to the force 4,000 men recruited in England. He said the Constabulary had been considerably under strength. He told the P.M. he thought martial law a necessity and that otherwise it would be impossible to convict. L. G. was very emphatic upon the necessity for strong measures. We sat talking in the garden until a late hour. In the twilight and the darkness, amidst such peaceful surroundings, the discussion seemed strange and unreal. Every now and then some bird would utter a strange note, and L. G. would break off the conversation to identify it.

11TH.—Lord French called. We had a long talk about Ireland. He said he had been a good deal rattled but was better now. The life was very fatiguing—worse than active service. It was not realised that there was an Irish Army with regular divisions, battalions, companies, etc.. We were endeavouring to cope with the situation by police measures—quite unsuitable. He had urged that the country should be placed under martial law, but the Cabinet would not agree. The Prime Minister was not favourable. He (French) said he loved the Prime Minister and was only stopping on because he was the head of affairs. He (French) would do nothing to embarrass him, but was still of opinion that appropriate measures were not being taken. If the position were recognised and if the Irish were met by a proper military force, the whole agitation

<sup>1</sup>Now Major-Gen. Sir Hugh Tudor.

would be crushed in a few months. Hamar Greenwood and Macready did not agree with French. But they were new to the job. He thought they would alter their views. It was absurd to think that the British Army could not quell such an insurrection if given proper powers. He said it was an underground conspiracy. You might pass from one end of Ireland to the other and not see anything abnormal. But the rebel organisation was there.

12TH.—Lunched with Winston, who said he thought the country was quieter than it had been for years. He said, "This is the first time I have felt a sense of relaxation. No doubt there are strikes, but there is nothing in the shape of a big political movement calculated to cause anxiety. We are through the worst. We have weathered the storm better than any other country."

As usual he was violent against the Bolsheviks. He described the Prime Minister as a wonderful man. He said, "It is extraordinary that we have been able to work together on such terms of personal friendship notwithstanding the divergence of our views regarding Russia. [I think it most extraordinary. R.] The difference is so marked that I know exactly which foreign telegrams will please him and which will please me. I could mark them with red and blue before he sees them, and I should be right in every case."

I told Winston of Lenin's speech, in which he said that the day of pure democracy was finished and that freedom of speech and the freedom of the Press were its two chief characteristics. "Why should these things be allowed?" he went on. "Why should a Government which is doing what it believes to be right allow itself to be criticised? It would not allow opposition by lethal weapons. Ideas are much more fatal things than guns. And as to the freedom of the Press, why should any man be allowed to buy a printing press and disseminate pernicious opinions calculated to embarrass the Government?"

13TH (SUNDAY).—Dined with L. G. at Cobham as usual. Lord and Lady St. Davids were there and Miss Cazalet.

I told L. G. of my interview with French. He said he (L. G.) did not agree with martial law, but that special tribunals were to be set up. He said, "You must have the civilian element."

We talked of Lenin's letter to the British workers,<sup>1</sup> which L. G. described as an insane document. I said, "It looks to me as if Lenin were becoming a bit rattled." L. G. agreed. He said the negotiations with Krassin were not making good progress, and thought that Lenin's letter might make matters more difficult. He gave a characteristic description of Krassin. He said, "He is always looking over his shoulder as if he expected to be shot!" L. G. thinks him a capable man.

20TH (SUNDAY).—To Hythe. Another conference at Lympne between L. G., Austen Chamberlain, Millerand and the French Minister of Finance. Foch and Henry Wilson summoned at the last moment regarding the Turkish position—very serious, Kemal Pasha<sup>2</sup> being on his hind legs. Venizelos also in attendance. It was decided to give him a free hand with the Turks. Wilson told me that he and Foch regard the situation with apprehension and adhere to the advice they gave at San Remo when the Treaty was drafted. The position of the French is curious. They had an armistice with Kemal which they asked him to renew, but apparently he declined. In any case it is said that the French troops will not fight against the Turks, so that if the Greeks have bitten off more than they can chew, it will be Great Britain, as usual, that will have to come to the rescue. Wilson most contemptuous in his remarks about the "Frocks." He says that Foch keeps on repeating that the "Frocks" have "mucked up" Europe.

Lympne presented a curious spectacle. In one room the chiefs conferring, in another the minor officials in conference, in another the secretariat at work, in a fourth a sumptuous tea, cakes, fruit, and every delicacy. In the kitchen the French chefs getting ready a magnificent dinner—later on the dining-room cleared so that the servants might make their preparations

<sup>1</sup>This letter, dated May 30th and published on June 11th, defended the "Red Terror," attacked the British Government for its anti-Bolshevik activities, explained the failure of peace negotiations between the two Governments, and generally incited the British workers to throw off the capitalist yoke.

<sup>2</sup>On April 23rd Mustafa Kemal had been elected head of the new Turkish Government at Angora, set up in opposition to the Sultan's Government in Constantinople, and was at this time busily organising resistance to the Allies, who controlled the Sultan.

for the feast—hangers-on then relegated to the entrance hall, where they stood sadly about with a dense fog outside covering the marshes overlooked by the house. In the evening, dinner—very good, with Philip Sassoon and his sister, Lady Rocksavage, and another lady whose name I did not catch—a very pleasant woman—hovering over the scene, while the gladiators enjoyed the pleasures of the table. Everything done regardless of expense. After dinner a cinema show. Sassoon and Lady Rocksavage very useful. They know French perfectly and can keep up a conversation with Millerand and others.

As usual, everything wrapped in mystery—"Hush!" being the order of the day. But as usual everything leaked out.

I had "Pertinax," the French journalist, out to lunch on Saturday, and drove him to Folkestone to-day. A clever fellow. I think what I said to him and the other French journalists at San Remo has done good. They are not so bitter as they were. I said more to him to-day. I told him that we had made our sacrifices as well as the French, and gave him some details concerning taxation which seemed to surprise him. He is well fed by the French with official stuff. They show him the documents.

21ST.—Crossed to Boulogne. L. G. had a good reception by the French, who were more demonstrative than on any former occasion—no doubt all arranged by Millerand, who seems genuinely anxious to bring about a good understanding between the two countries. We returned home on the following day, Tuesday. The proceedings at this conference were more formal than usual. I had little chance of a talk with L. G. alone. The conference took place in the Mayor's villa—rather a gloomy little place at the top of a hill on the edge of the town. It was held in a small room with glass doors through which the proceedings could be plainly perceived. Foch, Wilson, etc., walked about the grounds. Foch delightful as usual, but I could not say much to him because he does not know English and I do not know French. It was amusing to see him try to light his pipe. His efforts were most ponderous. First he waited patiently for the wind to stop blowing. Then he contemplated the use of my hat. Then

he walked off to find a secluded wall. Ultimately he accomplished his object in the shelter of Philip Kerr's coat—all very natural and attractive, and a good advertisement for English matches, as he was carrying a box I had lent him.

Long talk with Austen Chamberlain about his father. I referred to his father's style. He said his father remarked one day, "I know nothing about style. There is only one author I have consciously endeavoured to copy—Thackeray—whose writing I greatly admire." C. said that his father, although radical in his views, was curiously old-fashioned. He would never speak on the telephone and insisted on all his letters being written in long-hand.

I spent a great part of the afternoon in the garden of the villa talking to Henry Wilson and Kerr. The former says that Germany is faced with two alternatives—a militarist autocratic state, or a militarist Bolshevik state. Which it will be, he does not know, but is sure it will be one or the other.

L. G. came out of the conference room and joined us. He said, "We are getting on well—far better than I expected. There is nothing like a heart-to-heart talk. Millerand and I did splendid work at Hythe. I wish the French and ourselves never wrote letters to each other. Letters are the very devil. They ought to be abolished altogether. Riddell and I are old lawyers. We know that if you want to settle a thing, you see your opponent and talk it over with him. The last thing you do is write him a letter. (Turning to me) You agree with that, don't you?"

R. : Yes, letters are chiefly useful for recording agreements.

L. G. : That is their proper purpose.

Wise, of the Food Control Department, who is carrying on negotiations with the Bolsheviks, was present.

L. G. : Krassin is an able man, but the people in Russia will do him in.

I told L. G. that one of the newspaper correspondents had just come from Russia, where he had been for three months. L. G. said he would like to see him, but he thought it would be imprudent. I said, "I will introduce him to Wise."

L. G. : Yes, he had better have a talk with him.

The introduction took place, and Wise and I had a long

chat with the journalist—a member of the staff of an American newspaper—who gave us a vivid account of his experiences in Russia. He spoke well of Lenin who, he said, was a fanatical idealist with good intentions, but his account of the other leaders was very different. He told us that “graft” was rife, that the people were starving, that the experiment had proved a complete failure, and that the only bright spots were the Welfare Departments for delicate children, which were certainly well managed, and so far as he had been able to see, these children were the only people who were properly fed. He said that when he went to Russia he was rather in favour of Bolshevism, but his experiences had shown him that the whole scheme was a failure.

Wise is a pleasant man, but an obstinate bureaucrat of the university type. He says he is always anxious to learn the truth, but it was curious to see how painful it was for him to hear unpleasant facts from the American.

26TH.—Went to Cobham in the morning to golf with L. G., but owing to the uncertain state of the weather we spent the day in the garden, going on to golf at 5 o'clock.

L. G. : Mr. A. made a poor speech in the House on Mesopotamia—very poor stuff. He had great opportunities. I went with matter prepared to deal with several points I thought he would raise, but there was no occasion. How different from old Gladstone ! What an attack he would have made !

We then went on to talk about Russia.

L. G. : Krassin is having a very rough time of it. Chicherin, the Foreign Minister, is doing his best to prevent the arrangements.

Wise thinks that Lenin is acting with the moderates, i.e. against Chicherin. The whole situation is interesting. Krassin has offered to fly to Russia to meet his critics. L. G. thinks he is a courageous man. He (L. G.) described the situation as most interesting. He doubts whether anything will come of the negotiations.

Much talk with L. G. about public expenditure. I said that everyone sees instances of waste that make him think that waste is general. I mentioned one or two things.

L. G. : These things do not really matter. What you have to deal with are the big things that really make a difference. Take for example the bread subsidy. If we abolished it, no doubt the result would be to bring about increased demands for wages and to start the vicious circle revolving once more. In fact, most of the large items are questions of policy. I did think of taking the Exchequer myself, but I don't see how I could do the work.

R. : That would be absurd. There is too much concentration already. I don't quite agree about the expenditure. I think the small apparent items matter from the psychological point of view.

L. G. : I am not sure that we have not been too liberal with the war pensions.

I asked him what he thought of Worthington-Evans. He said, "Quite a capable man. I am going to take him to Spa. He might make a good Chancellor. He would take advice and has pretty good judgment. But Austen Chamberlain is much better in the House. He is a good speaker, with an excellent Parliamentary manner."

We spoke of the situation in Turkey. I said, "Do you think it was wise to give Smyrna to the Greeks<sup>1</sup>?"

L. G. : I have no doubt about it. You must decide whom you are going to back. The Turks nearly brought about our defeat in the war. It was a near thing. You cannot trust them and they are a decadent race. The Greeks, on the other hand, are our friends, and they are a rising people. We want to be on good terms with the Greeks and Italians.

We must secure Constantinople and the Dardanelles. You cannot do that effectively without crushing the Turkish power. Of course the military are against the Greeks. They always have been. They favour the Turks. The military are confirmed Tories. It is the Tory policy to support the Turks. They hate the Greeks. That is why Henry Wilson, who is a Tory of the most crusted kind, is so much opposed to what we have done.

<sup>1</sup>After the Armistice the Allies were unable to reach agreement on the Turkish Peace, and in May 1919 the Greek Army landed at Smyrna under the protection of the British, French and American fleets.



*June 1920]*

## THE PEACE CONFERENCE AND AFTER

To-morrow L. G. is to speak at the Welsh Chapel in Castle Street.

He said, "To-morrow night I shall not be at home. So we cannot have our usual weekly chat. You must come to dinner to-night, as I never like to miss my meetings with you."

## Chapter XXV

*The Peace Conference at Brussels—L. G.'s knowledge of history—Field Marshal Wilson recalls memories of Foch—Publicity problems again—An encounter with Hugo Stinnes.*

JULY 1ST, 1920 *et seq.* TILL ABOUT JULY 9TH.—To Brussels with L. G. and party to a Peace Conference. On the way to Dover L. G. said that Krassin was returning to Moscow. Before he left he made a grim observation to Wise, who was explaining L. G.'s difficulties in coming to an agreement with the Russians. "In my country Ministers are liable to be shot!"

Visited Zeebrugge with L. G., Kerr, Sassoon, Miss Stevenson, etc.. The British Naval Commander gave a detailed account of the attack. L. G. said it took him by the throat.

At Brussels we spent two days, July 2nd and 3rd. Much strife regarding the division of the indemnity. The Belgians very angry with the British for supporting the Italian claim.

L. G. much impressed by Belgian prosperity. He describes the Belgians as, per head, the richest nation in Europe, and the smiling, prosperous country gives tangible evidence in support of that view.

On Friday night, July 2nd, I dined at the Palace, the party consisting of the chief members of the delegations. The Palace is in splendid order, and the contents apparently intact, notwithstanding the German occupation for five years. The King and Queen very charming and anxious to please. They shook hands with everyone present in order, the guests being ranged round the wall of the reception-room. L. G. took the Queen in to dinner, and she sat next to Millerand, L. G. sitting opposite to her. Millerand escorted her out of the room at the end of the dinner, so that the honours were divided. After dinner we adjourned to the reception-room, where coffee was served and the King and Queen talked to the various members of the party. Everyone stood and there was no smoking. The dining-room presented a dazzling spectacle, the great table

with its ninety guests being lit with huge clusters of candles in addition to the electric lights in the vast chandeliers. Almost everyone present wore decorations. Curzon was very kind. He said to me, "I know you don't like standing for hours. Being 'lamish' I have the King's permission not only to sit myself, but to ask people who are speaking to me to sit by my side. You come and sit next to me all the evening. That will save your legs!"

Long talk with General Groves of the Air Service,<sup>1</sup> who urged upon me the necessity for preparations for offence and defence in this branch. He said that the largest air attack by the Germans on London was made by 36 machines of a comparatively old-fashioned type. In the event of another war London would probably be attacked by aeroplanes of a much superior class. He described the new method of attacking warships by torpedoes launched from the air. His whole conversation very informative. I strongly advised him to make a public speech giving the facts or to get some other well-known person connected with science or the air to do so. Considering the result of the attacks on London by a very limited number of aeroplanes, one can easily conceive what would happen if it were attacked by even 500, particularly as Groves told me that the use of gas bombs would probably result in the deaths of at least a million people. He said that on grounds of economy as well as efficiency we should develop the Air Service instead of devoting practically all our attention to the Navy and Army.

Drove with L. G., Henry Wilson and others to Waterloo (July 4th). We climbed to the top of the memorial mound and listened to the description of the battle by General Sackville West. L. G., as usual on these occasions, very much interested. Then we went to Hougomont, inspected the buildings and walked about the grounds. Much talk about the fifteen decisive battles of the world.

L. G. : Comparatively speaking, Waterloo was a small affair. What is it that makes it of prominent arresting interest? Is it because of the romance attaching to Napoleon, the chief actor in the scene?

<sup>1</sup> British Air Representative at the Peace Conference.

R. : No, because for the time being it settled the fate of Europe.

HENRY WILSON : Yes, that was the reason.

The conversation turned on other great battles. One of the soldiers expressed surprise at L. G.'s knowledge of ancient military history.

R. : History is one of the P.M.'s strong points. He takes a real delight in it.

L. G. : Yes, it is rather amusing. Sometimes they think I know nothing about history. As a matter of fact, I am pretty good at historical details. They have always interested me. I have always been good at history and geography. They are my subjects.

We lunched at Waterloo, and then motored to Spa, having tea on the road. Quite a pleasant trip. I had a most interesting drive with Henry Wilson, who gave a vivid account of his first meeting with Foch, long before the war. Foch was then head of a military academy. Wilson had heard of him and was anxious to meet him. In the course of the drive, Wilson showed me the building in which Foch had his offices at the date in question. During a bicycle tour in France, Wilson called on Foch, who would not see him, as he never granted interviews to foreigners. Wilson called several times without success. Eventually he caught Foch going out to lunch. Wilson, being a good French scholar, was able to introduce himself. The two men at once took to each other. The interview was the beginning of a firm friendship, and, as Wilson said, it was probably the seed that led to the Entente. He showed me the district which he had been in the habit of examining for military purposes in the course of bicycle rides taken early in his career. He then felt sure that sooner or later there would be a war between Germany and France. He is a most amusing, attractive companion.

*Important interview* (July 5th). Saw L. G. specially regarding publicity and told him most emphatically that more information must be given out. I said that unless this were done there would be all sorts of lying rumours, and that the public were growing sick and tired of secrecy which was only half secrecy.

Kerr supported me in my view.

L. G. : Well, there is a good deal in what you say. Of course, the French and Belgians will give out a lot of stuff.

R. : We know from experience what they will do. The Conference always adopts the wrong policy. The members swear themselves to secrecy. One or more nations always break the vow, and at the end of the Conference everyone breaks it.

L. G. : Well, this time at any rate the British will give out everything.

KERR : When Riddell and I get a free hand we are not bad publicity agents for the British Empire !

As a result of this conversation I was enabled for the first time in the history of Peace Conferences to furnish the newspaper correspondents with full and accurate accounts of the proceedings. Some of the information I got from L. G. himself, and the remainder from Kerr, who attended the meetings and took notes which he afterwards communicated to me. It was thus, in effect, possible for me to give a full and accurate report to the Press twice a day. This entirely altered the usual Peace Conference atmosphere. Very few misrepresentations were published, and the newspapers and public were pleased and satisfied. All through the Peace Conferences till now L. G. has taken the wrong view of publicity. He always wants to negotiate in secret and does not recognise that this is impossible in these days, when every public function is surrounded by myriads of reporters and when every public man and official, including L. G. himself, when it suits him, is anxious to use the Press to advance his own plans and policy. I have thrown my meetings open to American journalists so that day by day the doings of the Conference have been communicated to 200 millions of people. The British and American journalists entertained me to dinner and said nice things. Noble Hall, *The Times* representative, and Elmer Roberts, representing the Associated Press of America, remarked in the course of their speeches that no one had ever had a similar responsibility, that it had been my task to inform the British and American peoples of what had been taking place in the Conference, and that no one had ever spoken to a larger audience. They were good

enough to say that I had performed these functions with discretion and success.

[This all seems so egotistical that in a way I hate to record it, but we all have our little vanities.]

When replying I said that Peace Conferences had taught me the advantages of close union and friendship between British and American journalists. Further that there were two ways of conducting international negotiations : (1) the old-fashioned way through diplomatic channels ; (2) the new-fashioned way through the medium of publicly announced meetings. Which is the better plan I was not prepared to say, but it is certain that secrecy is essential for the former method and a wide amount of frankness and publicity for the latter.

This has been a dramatic Conference—the first appearance of the Germans, looking very nervous and self-conscious. The Conference took place in the Villa Fraineuse—a fine house on the top of a hill, as usual. The Conference room opened out of a large stone hall with a staircase on the right and a small reception-room on the left. The hall and staircase were crowded with distinguished people waiting to be called in regarding subjects in which they were concerned. Old Foch was a fine sight, sitting there reading his papers just like any ordinary mortal. He is a most unassuming person. One day while he was sitting there, a small kitten made a great fuss of him. One of the officers said to him, " Marshal, won't you do this kitten the honour of allowing her to be photographed with you ? " Foch beamed all over his face, picked the little thing up, and was photographed with her in his arms. The other day I measured his hat. It was  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches long by  $6\frac{3}{8}$  inches wide. Out of curiosity I compared the measurements with those of my own, which is 8 inches long and  $6\frac{1}{8}$  inches wide.

Herr Ferenbach, the German Prime Minister, looks rather a nice old boy. L. G. thinks well of him. But the star of the German delegation is Dr. Siemens, a clever lawyer with quick wits. When L. G. reproached the Germans with not collecting the rifles, Siemens responded, " Even in your great country you are not always able to collect arms, I understand ! " (Of course he referred to Ireland.) Then when L. G. said that in

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## THE PEACE CONFERENCE AND AFTER

1870 the French had put down the Communards, Siemens replied like a flash, "Yes, but we left them an army to enable them to do it!" In fencing parlance I think L. G. should have cried "*Touché!*"

It is interesting to note the different ways in which the various countries deal with their Press. After the sitting, Millerand, himself an old pressman, sees the reporters and makes a statement to them. In addition to this, one of the French officials supplies them with certain other details. The Belgians do the same, Dr. Hymans being the medium. The German Press meet Dr. Siemens after every sitting, when he makes a statement to them before he has lunch or dinner as the case may be. In addition to this, they are provided with a note made by one of the German secretaries. Our plan is different. After the Conference, I see L. G., Worthington-Evans, Lord D'Abernon—the British Ambassador at Berlin,<sup>1</sup> who attends the Conferences—and other officials, to pick up interesting points and ascertain impressions. L. G. is very good in this respect. He has a wonderfully keen way of picking out the thing that matters. I usually walk or drive back with him. Then Kerr, who makes a careful note of what happens, gives me a detailed account. After that I go to the Press room and make my statement. I usually manage to do this within half or three-quarters of an hour of the close of the proceedings, but it involves working like a black.

In a day or two Lord Derby arrived. Soon after his arrival he took me aside and said, "I am going to make another attempt to bring about a reconciliation between the P.M. and Northcliffe. If I were a private individual, and L. G. and Northcliffe had a quarrel, it would be of no interest to me, except as a matter of gossip. I should say, 'Let them fight it out!' But, holding the position I do, I feel it my duty to attempt a reconciliation."

10TH.—Stinnes,<sup>2</sup> the German capitalist, upset the

<sup>1</sup> From 1920-26.

<sup>2</sup> Hugo Stinnes, who at this time owned an immense chain of coal mines, iron and steel works, and ships, and who in 1921 was reported to be preparing a huge trust to control the whole of German industry. He died in 1924 at the age of fifty-four.

Conference by saying he intended to speak as a matter of right, and that people who were not suffering from the disease of victory would appreciate his point of view and what he had to say. He also made an impertinent reference to the employment of black troops.

L. G. said to me as we walked away, "To-day we have seen a specimen of the real jack-boot German. I wish I were going to reply this afternoon ! I should say something that would annoy Mr. Stinnes !"

Millerand in reply said there was no desire to chastise the Germans, and that if they performed the Treaty they would again be received into the family of nations. These sentiments did not meet with the approval of the French Press, and there is a terrible hullabaloo in Paris. L. G. is very pleased about the Conference, which was his idea. He says it has shown the advantages of discussion as compared with notes.

"You and I, as old lawyers," said he, repeating what he has often remarked before, "know that if we want to settle a case we always see the man on the other side. We don't write him letters."

L. G. is very fond of bringing in a reference to his legal activities. When talking of reparations he said :

"You and I as old lawyers appreciate that when one is dealing with a bankrupt estate there are two methods which require consideration—one to sell up the assets for what they are worth and divide the proceeds, and the other to nurse the estate with a view to getting a bigger dividend later on. In dealing with the Germans we shall have to adopt the latter policy. But the question is to what extent."

I have had several talks with D'Abernon. He seems a shrewd sensible man. He made several good suggestions regarding my Press announcements.

The other night at dinner we had some rather good political stories.

L. G. : After Chamberlain left Gladstone he made a most effective speech in the House of Commons. John Morley said that Gladstone leant over to him and said in his deep impressive tones, "He never made speeches like that when he was with us !"



In L. G.'s opinion, Gladstone's speech on the third reading of the Home Rule Bill in 1883 was one of the finest debating efforts ever made in the House of Commons. L. G. thinks that Gladstone's outstanding quality was his power as a debater. L. G. thinks him by far the best debater he ever heard. He thinks Asquith's speech on the death of Alfred Lyttelton one of the best panegyrics in the English tongue, and that two of Mr. A.'s speeches in the House of Commons early in the war entitle him to rank high in the list of British orators. L. G. gave an amusing account of his early experiences with Gladstone. The latter brought in a bill with the object of relieving drunken clergymen of their benefices, or something of that sort. L. G. opposed it in a flippant speech, and said that in Wales they preferred drunken clergymen to sober ones as they were usually more human, etc.. This roused the old man. He trounced L. G. in a fifty minutes' speech, and then took the unusual course of serving on the Committee on the Bill. L. G. and Sam Evans<sup>1</sup> obstructed as much as they could. When the majority, in order to make progress, decided to abandon the luncheon hour, which they could do by taking their lunch in relays, L. G. and Evans provided themselves with sandwiches, lemonade and beer, the bottles being paraded on the table in the Committee room.

Sir William Milligan, the Manchester doctor, is in Spa. L. G. gave an amusing account of his illness in Manchester.<sup>2</sup> He said that the Town Hall is a dreary place, and the noise of the trams a terrible test of endurance for an invalid. "Just think of it!" he said. "Being imprisoned there for days with nothing to look at but the pouring rain, the statue of poor John Bright standing out in the wet, and Mr. Gladstone's back!"

L. G. said that John Dillon was taken by some friends to tea with Mr. Gladstone in his later years. The conversation turned on Chamberlain, and Gladstone remarked, more as a reverie than as part of the conversation, "No doubt he was the

<sup>1</sup>Later the Rt. Hon. Sir Samuel Evans, President of the Probate, Divorce and Admiralty Court; d. 1918.

<sup>2</sup>In September 1918, when he was attended by Sir William Milligan (d. 1929).

greatest figure which has emerged in politics during the past thirty years."

L. G. and D'Abernon both agreed that Gladstone's great mistake was lack of appreciation of Chamberlain's position. He offered him an under-secretaryship instead of a place in the Cabinet. That made Joe his enemy, and he never forgave Gladstone.

L. G. : Gladstone did not understand Chamberlain. It was a new type. He understood university men and the working man, but he did not understand a commercial man who had gained his experience in municipal life.

R. : I doubt whether you are right. John Bright and Cobden were not very different from Joe. John Bright was the first commercial man to break into the highest circles. When he visited the Queen, the entourage were evidently doubtful whether he would eat with his knife.

L. G. : Yes, there is a good deal in that criticism.

## Chapter XXVI

*Foreign Office isolation—L. G. talks of attacks on public men—Russia's reply to his intervention on Poland's behalf—Philip Kerr's position—The strain of office—The menace of Bolshevism.*

JULY 12TH, 1920.—Dined with L. G., Sassoon, Kerr and Miss Stevenson in L. G.'s private room. One of the most violent thunderstorms I have ever seen, crashing peals of thunder and blinding lightning. We dined with the window open. L. G. delighted with the storm, which I thought symbolic of the condition of the world.

Later I had a long talk with Kerr. He spoke much of L. G.'s policy and relations with the Foreign Office. He said the latter had no conception of policy in its wider sense and did not in the least understand what L. G. was driving at.

I said, "What is the policy? I gather L. G.'s main objects to be to get the German Treaty executed in so far as possible, to put Germany on her feet again, to maintain Poland, as defined by the Treaty, to make peace with Russia and to re-constitute that country as a useful factor in the industrial life of the world." Kerr agreed but added that the Foreign Office did not appreciate the bearing of the various factors upon one another, e.g., they did not understand the necessity for achieving a Russian settlement.

I said that Great Britain was seriously handicapped because our Press are not adequately informed of the trend of our foreign policy. I told Kerr, as I had told Curzon, that the papers will not take a line from Downing Street. Traditionally they are accustomed to receive information on foreign affairs from the F.O., and will pay attention to what the F.O. tell them. In the old days, when newspapers were fewer and only three or four of them dealt exhaustively with foreign affairs,

the information was given out by some of the officials who kept in close touch with the Press and who were themselves dealing with the matters involved. To-day there are so many papers dealing with foreign affairs and so many subjects requiring comment that this scheme is impossible. I said that in my opinion the time had come when a competent journalist should be employed for the purpose—one who would keep in touch with Downing Street, the Foreign Secretary and the heads of the various departments at the Foreign Office and keep the Press advised as to the trend of our policy. I said they would not get a suitable man under £1,500 or £2,000, and suggested one or two suitable names.

Kerr agreed, and the P.M. subsequently told him that he approved. Curzon had already signified his assent. Kerr said, however, that the salary seemed prohibitive, as most of the head men at the F.O. did not get more than £1,500 or £2,000. He said that the F.O. and Treasury would be aghast at the proposal to pay a journalist such remuneration. I told Kerr and the P.M. that a suitable man would not be got on any other terms.

18TH (SUNDAY).—Dined at Cobham with L. G., Megan and Miss Stevenson. At dinner L. G. very preoccupied and irritable about small things. In particular his tomato salad was not to his liking. He therefore set to work to remake it, and spent some time in clumsily slicing the tomatoes—a quaint sight. After dinner he and I sat in the summer-house in the garden till 10 o'clock.

L. G. : Public life is becoming almost impossible for any decent man. Unless they take care they will drive all decent people out of it. Public men are maligned and abused as if they were criminals. All sorts of base motives are imputed to them. I have been at Spa working twelve and fourteen hours a day under trying conditions—eating bad food and sitting in stifling rooms. I am represented as having been on a joy-ride. Such attacks are scandalous, and I sometimes feel that I will resign and regain my independence.

Several times during the evening, as we sat there in the dusk, L. G. alluded to the expected reply from the Soviet Government regarding the cessation of hostilities against the

Poles.<sup>1</sup> He was evidently very excited and telephoned two or three times to ascertain if the Russian cable had arrived. The conduct of international affairs is a great game. L. G. was just as eager about this message as a lover awaiting a telegram. He said, "Much depends on the Soviet reply."

At about 9.30 a telephone message arrived saying that the Russian telegram, 2,400 words, had come. L. G. dashed into the house to hear it and shortly returned saying that the message was too long to read over the telephone, but the gist of it was that, while the Russians did not admit the right of any nation or group of nations to intervene in the dispute between Russia and Poland, they would grant an armistice if the Poles asked for one, as there was nothing they desired more than peace.

"I don't call that unreasonable, do you?" enquired L. G.. I replied that I thought the condition quite reasonable, and asked whether Krassin was returning.

L. G. : Yes, but I must stop him. I cannot see him while the Russians are fighting the Poles. I must telegraph to stop the destroyer in which Krassin is to travel.

(He at once telephoned to that effect and gave instructions for the Russian despatch to be sent to him by messenger.)

We talked of the Greenwood case, in which a South Wales solicitor is charged with poisoning his wife.

L. G. : The trial will not take place until November.

R. : That will be to his advantage. The state of feeling will have abated by then. The chances are that he will get off. He will explain the poison in the body.

L. G. : He is not bound to furnish an explanation. The onus is upon the prosecution to prove that he put it there.

R. : If they prove the motive, the presence of the poison, and acts on the part of the prisoner consistent with his having administered it, that will be sufficient.

L. G. : The facts concerning the motive are against him,

<sup>1</sup>In July 1920 the Polish Army was in a serious position. In May it had entered Kiev, but now the Soviet Army, having defeated Denikin and Kolchak, concentrated against it and drove it back in confusion. At this point Poland appealed to the Allies for mediation, and the telegram awaited by Mr. Lloyd George was the reply to their intervention.

but he may rebut the charge that he administered the poison by referring to the conduct of one of the chief witnesses against him.<sup>1</sup>

I give this to show L. G.'s acuteness and facility. Although immersed in all these gigantic negotiations, he is able not only to assimilate and remember the facts of a murder case, but to discuss in detail with great acuteness the conduct of the defence.

L. G. says that Worthington-Evans, although quite good, is not as successful as he thought he would be. However, time will tell.

22ND.—Talk with Winston, who was very depressed regarding the Polish situation. He said, "The Bolsheviks are fanatics. Nothing will induce them to give up their propaganda and endeavours to create a communistic world." He prophesies that they will attempt the formation of a Soviet Government in Poland and later on endeavour to accomplish their purpose in Germany. "It may well be," he continued, "that Great Britain and France will have to call upon the Germans for their assistance."

R. : The difficulty is that Great Britain and France have gradually assumed the position of being responsible for the management of Europe—a task which they are not equipped to perform.

WINSTON : They have not got the money and they have not got the men. The situation is tragic.

R. : One of America's chief points was the creation and maintenance of an independent Poland—a subject which furnished President Wilson with some of his most eloquent periods. Now America has backed out and does not even enquire what is being done. Apparently she gets her information from the newspapers. It is one of the greatest historical scandals on record.

WINSTON : I quite agree. Meanwhile we have to face the music. In this country the whole problem of government has become most perplexing. L. G. is a wonderful man, but he cannot attend to everything. All his time and energy are occupied by international affairs, with the result that he cannot

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Greenwood was acquitted.

give sufficient attention to domestic affairs, which are of equal importance and urgency, e.g. Ireland. Bonar Law does his best, but will not make important decisions. The consequence is that the engine of government is thrown out of gear at almost every point. The P.M. is proposing to set up a committee of business men to consider the question of expenditure. But great economies depend upon questions of policy, which must be decided by the Cabinet.

R. : Yes, no committee could determine, for example, whether the bread subsidy is to be continued. A wrong decision might do enormous damage. You might save the bread subsidy, but you might bring about vast increases in wages.

WINSTON : Yes. The same thing applies to other items. No man can stand the strain the P.M. is bearing at the present time. He really ought to hand over the international questions to the Foreign Secretary. At present the P.M. is conducting the business of the Foreign Office with Kerr's assistance. I don't think that any man who does not hold a leading position in the State should be permitted to exercise so much influence on important questions of policy as Kerr does. I told him so the other night. I said to him, " You have no real responsibility. If things go wrong, others have to take the consequences. All you have to do is to walk out of Downing Street." They are formulating schemes which affect the lives of millions and the destinies of the world, and all this is done behind the scenes.

There may be some justice in these criticisms. But Kerr has been invaluable to the P.M. and is an able person—well informed and with a remarkable memory. He is one of the most charming men I have met—a great gentleman in every sense of the word. His manners are delightful, and he is a most attractive companion. Whether he has exercised too much influence behind the scenes is a subject on which there may reasonably be two opinions. My only criticism is that he has been too pro-Greek.

23RD.—To dine with the Lord Chancellor at the House of Lords, where he entertained the King and sixty other guests. We assembled in the long room and stood in an elongated

horseshoe. The King shook hands with everyone, and then we went in to dinner quite informally. I sat next to Winston, who was in splendid form. He told me that although he had had many disagreements with L. G., he was very fond of him, and would always be prepared to stand by him in a pinch. He dilated at length on the Bolshevik danger to civilisation. He said, "What I foresaw has come to pass. Now they are invading Poland, which they mean to make a jumping-off ground for propaganda in the rest of Europe. They will make peace with the Poles and endeavour to form a Soviet Government in Poland. The Bolsheviks are fanatics. Nothing will turn a fanatic from his purpose. L. G. thinks he can talk them over and that they will see the error of their ways and the impracticability of their schemes. Nothing of the sort! Their view is that their system has not been successful because it has not been tried on a large enough scale, and that in order to secure success they must make it world-wide."

R. : In commerce one frequently meets people of that sort—men whose schemes have failed and who allege that they would have succeeded had they been tried on a larger scale.

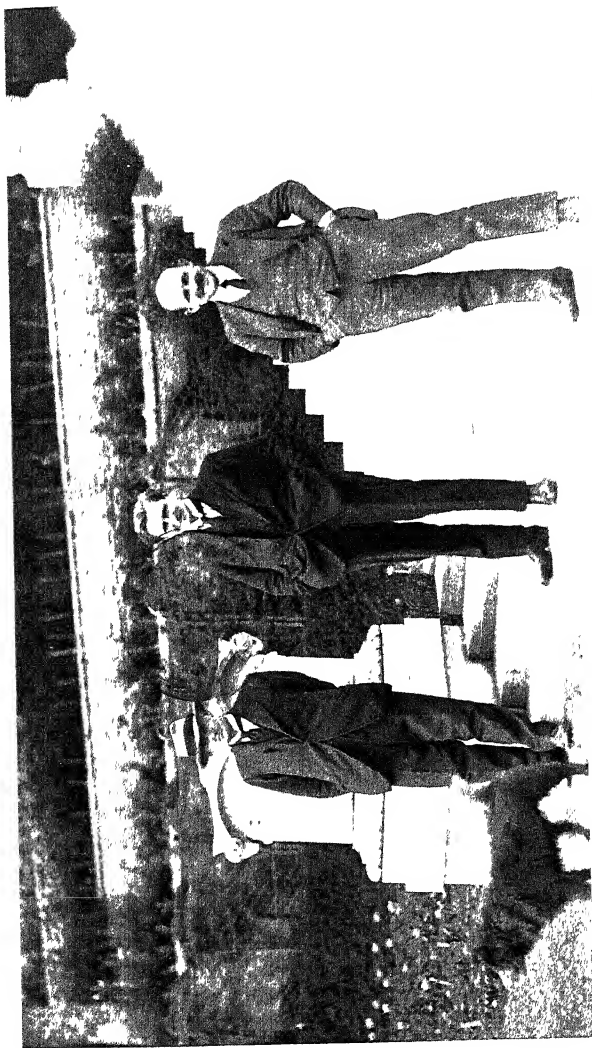
Lord Emmott,<sup>1</sup> who was sitting near, agreed, and then went on to give us an account of the information he had gathered as Chairman of a Departmental Committee appointed to ascertain the facts concerning the economic and political condition of Russia. He said that Mrs. Snowden<sup>2</sup> had told him that she went to Russia very suspicious of the practicability of Bolshevism, and that she returned convinced of its impossibility. She said, "They talk of the Red Army. Unfortunately we encountered a very large red army, in the shape of hordes of fleas, bugs and other insects." Bertrand Russell<sup>3</sup> had also returned with very decided views as to the failure of the Communistic movement, of which he had been a supporter before he went to Russia.

<sup>1</sup>Formerly Alfred Emmott, M.P. for Oldham, 1899-1911; First Commissioner of Works, 1914-15; Director War Trade Department, 1915-19; d. 1926.

<sup>2</sup>Now Viscountess Snowden.

<sup>3</sup>Now Earl Russell.





*(From left to right) : LORD RIDDELL, MR. PHILIP KERR (now MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN), and  
SIR MAURICE HANKEY  
photographed during one of the conferences at Sir Philip Sassoon's house at Hythe*

24TH.—Golf with L. G. at St. George's Hill. Called for him at Cobham. Before we left, a message arrived announcing that the Russian Government were prepared to grant the Poles an armistice and that instructions had been sent to the military commander to make the necessary arrangements. L. G. was in a high state of glee. When we arrived at the golf club he sat down in the dressing-room and wrote out a message to his secretary at Downing Street, instructing him what documents to issue to the Press. A very precise little document.

We talked about Ireland. L. G. said that Greenwood was doing well and showing courage. I said, "What are you going to do to quieten matters?"

L. G. : It is very difficult to control an unfriendly population unless very violent measures are resorted to. The Roman Catholic Church are becoming rather frightened. I had Cardinal Gasquet<sup>1</sup> to lunch this week. He is a charming old gentleman. I congratulated him on his book on the monks and said that I had quoted him in the House of Commons. He laughed, and, stretching out and shaking his hands, replied, "I remember ! That was when you used the words 'dripping with the fat of sacrilege'—a very fine phrase !"

We talked much of the difficulties of government and of the enormous strain involved. L. G. said that he had had a terrible week. Yesterday the Cabinet sat from 11 till 7, and he had Cardinal Gasquet and others to lunch to talk business. He said, "I am very tired and must be careful that I do not have a break-down. I often feel inclined to give the whole thing up. The strain is terrible, and, whatever one does, one is abused." I told him that on the previous evening at the Lord Chancellor's dinner to the King in the House of Lords, Winston, Walter Long and Stamfordham had all been speaking of the magnitude of modern government. Long and Winston are firmly convinced that the only remedy is devolution. The present Government is much too centralised. L. G. agreed, and remarked, "One has no time to think." I told him that Winston had compared the Bolsheviks to a snake creeping along on its slimy stomach, and then suddenly striking at its prey. L. G. said that when Krassin arrived, Winston came to

<sup>1</sup>The historian and Prefect of the Vatican Archives ; d. 1929.

him and said, laughing, "I suppose you have shaken the baboon's hairy hand?"

25<sup>TH</sup> (SUNDAY).—Dined with Mr. and Mrs. L. G. at Cobham. The Lees and Lord Dawson were there. Directly I arrived L. G. told me that the Bolsheviks had agreed to attend a conference in London. He said, "This is a great occasion. The Russians wish the leading Allies to attend, and, if necessary, the small nations whose territories abut on Russia, so that a general discussion on peace may take place. I am very pleased."

R. : How about propaganda? Have the Bolsheviks given undertakings that they will not carry on a campaign when they come to this country?

L. G. seemed a little staggered by this question and replied, "We did not make any stipulation about that except in regard to Litvinoff." I said, "I think there was some stipulation."

L. G. : Perhaps there was, but I don't think that arises now.

On Wednesday L. G. has to deliver a speech on Abraham Lincoln, when his statue is unveiled. He has been busy over the week-end reading up books on the subject. I took him Nicolai's book, which he had not got. He said he regards Lincoln as the biggest man ever thrown up by American politics—a much bigger man than Washington, who was always so correct that he was uninteresting. He never did anything wrong. L. G. said that Bryce<sup>1</sup> and Elihu Root<sup>2</sup> would be certain to make good speeches and that it would be difficult to live up to their standard, particularly as his time for preparation had been so meagre.

Dawson had evidently come to ascertain the state of L. G.'s health. He told Mrs. L. G. that the P.M. was healthy, but tired, and that he wanted a fortnight's rest at least. He gave the same account to the P.M. himself.

When the Lees and Dawson had gone, L. G. began to talk about answering his questions on the following day. Captain Evans, the secretary, then produced about fifty questions with draft replies. I left L. G. steadily ploughing

<sup>1</sup>Viscount Bryce, British Ambassador in Washington, 1907-13; d. 1922.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Secretary of State, 1905-9; member Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague; head of U.S. mission to Russia, 1917.

through these at 10.15. Truly the life of a Prime Minister is not to be envied.

On Tuesday he is going to Boulogne to meet Millerand, returning the same day.

31ST.—Lunched at Cobham with L. G., Miss Stevenson and Captain Evans. Then played golf at St. George's Hill.

The Polish situation has developed badly. I said to the P.M. :

"Lenin, Trotsky and Co. are trying to trick us. They are fanatics. Being fanatics, they think the end justifies the means. Moreover, they think we are trying to trick them. There is no doubt they are out to smash Western civilisation as we know it. They believe they have an economic panacea for the ills of mankind and mean to give effect to it. No doubt Lenin is thinking of the day when he will string you up to a lamp-post in Whitehall !"

I enforced this by reading extracts from Bertrand Russell's articles on Bolshevism in the *Nation*.

L. G. : There is a good deal in what you say. But the strength of our position lies in the fact that the Bolsheviks will probably quarrel among themselves. Trotsky will want to continue and extend the army. Krassin is not a Bolshevik at all. Then there are other sections who are likely to have discordant views.

R. : The question is when will the split come. The French revolutionaries went on for some years.

L. G. : Yes, and there was no outstanding figure who succeeded in imposing his will on the country, whereas in Russia you have such a personality, which makes it all the more dangerous. We are taking steps to help the Poles so far as we can. They have been badly led. We are supplying them with officers and munitions. Weygand is there and is getting a grasp of the situation.<sup>1</sup> The Poles are a most hopeless people. Paderewski came to see me this week. The whole of his conversation was directed to the boundaries of Teschen.<sup>2</sup> I said

<sup>1</sup> By this time the Soviet Army had driven the Poles back almost to the gates of Warsaw. With French help, Marshal Pilsudski organised a counter-offensive and on August 14th decisively defeated the Russians, who retreated in confusion.

<sup>2</sup> A district in south-east Silesia, the division of which had caused friction between Poland and Czecho-Slovakia.

to him, "What is the good of worrying about Teschen when your country is in such a parlous state and when you may lose the whole of Poland?" His only reply was, "Ah, well! What is life, then?" He was so much upset that he would not stop to lunch. He said, referring to the Teschen boundaries, "The Hohenzollerns would not have done this thing—the Romanoffs would not have done it—and just think of Lloyd George doing it!"

## Chapter XXVII

*Anglo-French differences over Poland—To Lucerne with L. G. —Police precautions—A conference with Giolitti—The Russians disappoint L. G.—A Lord Mayor's hunger-strike—Coal strike threats.*

SUNDAY, AUGUST 1ST, 1920.—Dined with L. G.. A pleasant evening. Macnamara, his wife, and Mme. Laura Evans Williams were there. Much music, L. G. taking a leading part in singing selections from oratorios.

8TH (SUNDAY).—To Hythe for another conference. The principal figures L. G., Millerand, Foch, Henry Wilson and Beatty.<sup>1</sup> Strong divergence between British and French views concerning Poland—almost sole subject for discussion. Originally it was intended that Millerand should return on Monday morning at 9.30, but L. G. prevailed upon him to stay until 4.30. As they stood in the hall at Lympe, L. G. made a strong appeal to him to stay to finish the business. On Sunday the Bolshevik reply to our Note proposing a conference in London was eagerly awaited. When it arrived it was deemed unsatisfactory, inasmuch as the Russians insisted upon direct negotiations with the Poles. It was evident to me that the Bolsheviks do not intend to make peace with the Poles through the Allies, but to press forward their military measures against Poland and to prosecute their propaganda campaign in all countries with the object of establishing Soviet Governments. I said to L. G., "Chicherin's despatch is a clever document."

L. G. : Not really clever. It would be greatly to the advantage of the Russians to make peace with France and Great Britain. The conquest of Poland is a minor matter. The French revolutionaries made the same error. Pitt did not want to fight them, but they forced us into a war regarding, I think it was, Holland. Robespierre was strongly opposed to the

<sup>1</sup> Admiral of the Fleet Earl Beatty, First Sea Lord, 1919-27.

policy decided upon, and he was right: Now the Russians are making a similar mistake.

L. G. gave me the statement for the Press on Sunday. I said, "This will be read with great care and anxiety. Are you certain that what you have said conveys your precise meaning? If not, serious harm may result." After consideration and consultation with Kerr, he changed some sentences and then asked me to tell him what I intended to say in my address to the Press. He listened intently, and then said, "Yes, that expresses my meaning."

Notwithstanding his worries, L. G. is in wonderful spirits. When I arrived he was crossing the lawn to speak to Millerand. He came over to me, and, shielding his mouth with his hands as if he were telling me a secret, whispered, "We have decided to go to Warsaw for another conference. Will you come with us?" In the evening there was a cinema show at the villa, which produced roars of laughter from the P.M., Millerand and Foch.

9TH.—The conference at Hythe concluded. L. G. said no statement was to be made to the Press except that a unanimous decision had been arrived at, subject, in the case of Great Britain, to the approval of Parliament, he having given an undertaking that Parliament would be consulted. I hear, however, that there is a serious difference between the French and British points of view regarding Poland. Foch took me on one side and enquired through an interpreter what was the view in Great Britain concerning the Polish question. I told him that the people were in favour of Polish independence but would not engage in another war.

Foch: They do not understand. They would do so if the newspapers would properly explain the situation. It is serious. If Poland falls, Germany and Russia will combine. You will have a worse position than in 1914.

R.: Are you willing to say that publicly?

Foch: Yes, it is a serious position which the world should understand. Events are on the march.

I was told that L. G. had declined to send Krassin and Kameneff<sup>1</sup> away, notwithstanding the Russian attitude

<sup>1</sup> Leaders of the Russian trade delegation.

regarding Poland. I said to L. G., "You cannot negotiate with Russia regarding trade while you are helping the Poles to make war upon her in Poland. Such a course would be grossly inconsistent."

L. G. : We shall see what Minsk brings forth. (The Russians and Poles are supposed to be meeting at Minsk on Wednesday.) If there is peace, well and good. If not, they will have to go back.

The Conference broke up with a strangely unreal air. One felt that the real feelings of those who had taken part in it were not openly expressed. Foch said what he meant, it is true, but I am not sure about the others. Everyone looked more than he said, except perhaps L. G., who probably thought more than he showed.

12TH.—Meeting Horne, explained to him the defects in his publicity in regard to the dispute with the colliers. I said, "Your interviews appear only in newspapers read by the converted. You never reach the mass of the people who read popular papers. You should issue an interview through the Press Association." Horne seemed surprised and thanked me. Later he did what I suggested.

14TH.—The trade unions have appointed a direct action committee to stop participation by us in the Russo-Polish war. L. G.'s talk about war has given the Labour leaders their chance. Krassin and Kameneff are busy with propaganda. I met Wise at Downing Street, when he eagerly enquired whether I thought we would go to war for the benefit of the Poles. He was pleased when I said, "No." I added, "But we might tighten the blockade!" That did not please him, but he comforted himself with the reflection that it would be no good. Chicherin's despatches show that the Bolsheviks feel they are on top. They have assumed an aggressive, domineering tone in the messages emanating from Petrograd. Here Krassin and Kameneff coo like doves.

18TH.—To Lucerne with L. G. and party. Megan, Gwilym, the Hankeys and their son, J. T. Davies, Miss Stevenson, Mrs. Rupert Beckett, Miss Cazalet and Miss Evans, a Welsh singer.

Much talk of attempts on L. G.'s life. The police very



averse to the trip. As a result we were accompanied by three detectives, and the house, the Villa Haslihorn, lent to L. G. by the King of the Belgians, was watched day and night by the Swiss police. L. G. said he wanted a holiday amongst the mountains and was absolutely bent on Switzerland. No doubt he is fond of mountains, but I think his real reason is that he is anxious to meet Giolitti, the Italian Prime Minister, in order to make a combination with him on the Russian and Polish questions. L. G.'s antipathy to the French very marked.

LUCERNE : 21ST.—Giolitti arrived. I went with L. G. to the station to meet him. The head of the Lucerne police told me afterwards that six men had been arrested, as it was believed they had designs on either L. G. or Giolitti or both. However, we saw no open signs of anything abnormal. Giolitti, notwithstanding that he is seventy-eight, walked with an erect firm step. He is a tall, stately old man and it was amusing to see him and L. G. walking down the platform together, L. G. with his short quick steps and Giolitti with his stately walk. He is a sharp old fox, and kept looking at L. G. very keenly out of the corners of his eyes.

22ND (SUNDAY).—The Conference took place at the villa under the trees in the garden. Hankey has established an office in one of the rooms, where the typewriter clicks from morning to night. After the Conference someone asked Giolitti what he thought of L. G.. He said, "He is very intelligent and acute, but I am a bit of a fencer myself."

In the morning L. G., Giolitti and Hankey agreed provisionally on a memorandum to be issued to the Press dealing with the Russian and Polish questions, the document having been prepared by L. G. and Hankey. Before lunch L. G. handed me the draft and asked me what I thought of it. It began by stating that the Governments of Great Britain and Italy thought it desirable to make a statement concerning their policy. I said I thought the memorandum undesirable and dangerous in its present form and that it would accentuate difficulties between France and ourselves.

L. G. was angry and strongly controverted my view. He also charged me with being pro-French. He continued the discussion at lunch-time, which made things rather awkward.

I said, "You asked my opinion, and I gave it. I may be wrong, but those are my views."

L. G. : Why should not Great Britain and Italy state their policy ? Great Britain and France have met on several occasions without Italy. Why should not Great Britain and Italy meet without France ?

R. : This is the first time that a public statement of policy of this sort has been issued.

Hankey came to me afterwards and said he was glad I had spoken as I did, adding, "After you had gone, L. G. said he was glad you had stated your views, as it was well to hear the other side." He had agreed to hold over the memorandum until the following day.

In the evening I handed L. G. a newspaper containing the full peace terms offered by the Bolsheviks to the Poles, and pointed out that they contained two new terms : (1) a proposal that a civic army should be formed in Poland composed of workers, and (2) that the Poles should publish all the correspondence leading up to the war.

L. G. perused the document with great interest.

23RD.—The memorandum was redrafted, mainly with reference to the variation in the Bolshevik terms, and also to the Polish military successes, which have entirely changed the aspect of affairs.

L. G. evidently very disappointed with the action of the Bolsheviks. He is still keen on making peace with them. I said, "Whatever you do, they will proceed with their propaganda and try to put the capitalist classes in all parts of the world on the defensive."

I added that the provision of 500,000 cottages would be the best bulwark he could have against Bolshevism. He replied, "What is the good of cottages if you have dear food ?" He said, "Russia before the war was one of the great exporters of grain. She has other things we want—oil and flax. It is most important that we should have peace in the East and that the Russian supply should become available for the rest of Europe. In my opinion that is one of the chief objects to be attained. It is impossible for us to abstain from endeavouring to achieve those ends."

The memorandum was finally settled on the terrace in front of the house, Giolitti going through one copy and altering it in pencil, and L. G. making alterations in another copy. L. G. gave detailed instructions to the secretariat as to the manner in which the document was to be telegraphed to London, and to whom it was to be sent.

When the memorandum had been completed, we all went off to Lucerne to meet the newspaper correspondents at the National Hotel. L. G. and Giolitti sat side by side and after the memorandum had been read and translated, they answered questions—L. G. very good as usual and Giolitti displaying great craftiness in his replies. I said to him, "It is easy to see why you have been Prime Minister five times! You are a very skilful fencer!" This pleased the old boy.

Giolitti lunched at the villa and was very affable. He told us that he was a lawyer by profession. L. G. referred to the stringent character of Italian taxation and then launched out, quite in his old Limehouse style, into a description of the reasons which make for Bolshevism and class jealousy. He said, "A man who has got a few pounds a week knows that there are many people who do not work as hard as he does and have enormous incomes, which they spend in a lavish manner, giving dinners which cost from £3 to £5 per head, and driving valuable motor cars which cost a fortune and a huge sum for maintenance. Then again, while the poor man cannot get a house at all he knows that large numbers of people have more than one house and that they do not occupy a tithe of the rooms."

25TH.—L. G. besieged by telegrams regarding the Lord Mayor of Cork,<sup>1</sup> who is killing himself by hunger-striking. L. G. drafted a statement for the Press in which he set forth the reasons why it was impossible to release the Lord Mayor. Evidently the matter is causing L. G. deep anxiety.

26TH.—Sir Hamar and Lady Greenwood arrived. Both very entertaining. He told some good stories.

30TH.—Went over to Sandwich from Folkestone to golf with Kerr. Lunched with him and A. J. Balfour at Lady

<sup>1</sup>Terence McSwiney, Sinn Fein M.P. for Mid-Cork, 1918-20; d. October 25th, 1920.

Astor's house. We three alone. A. J. B. charming and delightful.

Much talk about Russia. A. J. B., who is in charge at the Foreign Office, had prepared a memorandum in reply to the latest Bolshevik effusion. He and Kerr were settling the draft. A. J. B. said in effect, "The Prime Minister can take my draft or leave it." A. J. B. asked my opinion about Russia. I said, "I should remove all restrictions but should enter into no arrangements, leaving the commercial community to trade as they thought fit." Looking over at Kerr, Mr. B. remarked, "How strange ! That exactly coincides with my view !"

We had a long talk on economics.

A. J. B. : I have been thinking a great deal about this. I think it necessary that the public should be instructed on these matters. They should be shown how a nation benefits by accumulated wealth. I intend to make two or three speeches on the subject.

ABOUT SEPTEMBER 1ST, 1920.—Coal strike negotiations in full blast. Dined with Hartshorn, who told me there is a strong feeling among the miners in favour of a strike. They are very angry at the contumely showered upon them by the Press and believe this is due to the Board of Trade. He says that unless Horne is careful he will allow the miners to get into such a state of mind that they will strike just to show their independence.

Horne asked me to call. He said that he thought a strike imminent and outlined the Government preparations to meet it. I said I thought the strike would be avoided, as I did not believe the miners would be firm in their demand to prescribe the price of coal. Consequently the dispute would resolve itself into a wage question, which would be settled by some sort of compromise as usual. I told him the miners thought he was too much in favour of the masters. He protested that he had no leanings towards the proprietors.

I saw him again on September 11th, when I chaffed him for living too much with millionaires and Society people, and thus losing the democratic touch. He, however, asseverated that his point of view was fundamentally democratic. He said he had been reared in a Scottish colliery village, where

his father had been a parson. He admitted that he spent most of his time among the well-to-do, but said he was not conscious that his attitude had changed. I told him I thought it most essential that Labour should have better representation in Parliament. I said, "The only way you can hope to keep the country sound is to make the House of Commons the debating place for the people's grievances. At present, they don't trust the House. This is due in a great measure to the fact that they are not adequately represented there. There is much to be said in favour of a General Election."

HORNE : I entirely agree. I have told the Prime Minister we ought to have an election.

14TH.—Lunched with Inverforth at the Ministry of Munitions. He said financial conditions were becoming very stringent and it was becoming increasingly difficult to collect monies due to the Ministry for goods sold and otherwise. He also viewed the labour situation with apprehension. He said he had strongly urged upon Bonar Law the desirability of an early election and agreed with me that it was most important that Labour should have better representation in the House. He said Bonar Law had greatly benefited by his holiday and had told him he had never felt better.

15TH.—Dined with Hartshorn (with whom I drew up the Miners' Minimum Wage Bill before the war), Brace, Sir Joseph Hewitt<sup>1</sup> and Sir Andrew Duncan, the Coal Controller, at the Hotel Russell. Sir J. Hewitt entertained the party in royal fashion.

Very long discussion. Brace and Hartshorn read the proposals which they had made at the Miners' Executive to-day and which had been accepted. In effect, these eliminated the claim to fix the price of coal, emphasised the claim for 2s. increase in wages, and proposed machinery to increase the output, the fall in which had seriously perturbed the miners' leaders. Ultimately I suggested that the question of wages, output, etc., should be referred to a Joint Committee of masters and men. Everyone agreed to this.

Sir Joseph Hewitt, the host, is a big colliery proprietor—a genial, shrewd sort of man.

<sup>1</sup> The Barnsley solicitor and colliery owner ; d. 1923.

16TH.—Lunched with —, who is very anxious to be appointed Viceroy of India. He had written me a long letter proposing this. I said, "Why not approach the Prime Minister yourself?" He replied, "I don't care to do that, but should like you to read him my letter."

Later I did so at Downing Street. L. G. said — would not be suitable. I sent — a message, telling him this.

I had a long talk with L. G. about the threatened coal strike. I said, "I do not think there will be a strike. I think the matter will be settled"—and explained what had taken place last evening. L. G. however seemed very apprehensive, and thought it possible that the miners might strike immediately. I said, "In any case they will not do that. The dispute is now in the way for negotiation."

L. G. : Well we shall see.

## Chapter XXVIII

*Sinn Fein threats on L. G.'s life—"Black and Tan" reprisals—Unrest among ex-service men—The miners go on strike—A speech that annoyed Millerand—The danger of chaffing foreigners.*

OCTOBER 1ST, 1920.—Spent the evening with Hartshorn, Brace and Sir Andrew Duncan. The two former very disgruntled because, having fought the fight, the Government would give them no assistance, and had insisted upon 248,000,000 tons as the datum line for the 2s. advance, whereas Brace and Hartshorn had insisted upon 244,000,000 tons. They said they would not support the proposals, which are to be balloted among the miners. I made a strong appeal to the Coal Controller to modify the figures, which he agreed to do, but not to the extent demanded by Brace and Hartshorn. It was rather a painful interview. Brace and Hartshorn have no doubt achieved great things by defeating the direct action section.

2ND.—Saw L. G. and discussed with him what had happened on the previous evening. He said the Coal Controller had no authority to make any change in the figures, and that he was surprised to hear he had made such promises. Therefore the ballot will go forward on the figures as originally stated. The chances are that the miners will accept, but the Government are running risks.

*Later.*—Went with L. G. to Trent Park, Sassoon's place near Barnet, where the P.M. is staying owing to threats upon his life by the Sinn Feiners. In the afternoon played golf. Macnamara played with us. L. G. very optimistic. He thinks the revolutionary spirit is dying down and that Labour is much more contented than formerly. He said we in this country are much more advanced than the rest of the world. We have done much more for Labour. And Labour is better off here than anywhere else.

Notwithstanding the threats on his life, he displayed the

greatest equanimity, and undoubtedly his invincible optimism and belief in himself carry him through. I showed him a saying by William James, the American philosopher: "Always try to do something heroic every day. Always try to overcome some difficulty every day," and asked him what he thought of it.

L. G.: That is nonsense. A man who arranges his life on that footing is certain to become a prig. I say the proper maxim is, "Never shirk when you have to face a difficulty, but don't encounter difficulties if you can avoid them!"

Mrs. Macnamara and Hamar Greenwood and his wife also arrived. Greenwood admitted that his life was in constant danger. He seems to be tackling his job with great fearlessness and to be giving the Sinn Feiners some of their own medicine.

After lunch we played golf. L. G. in high spirits.

I was asked by three Irish papers, the *Cork Examiner*, *Freeman's Journal* and *Irish Independent* to make representations as to threats by the "Black and Tans"<sup>1</sup> regarding their premises and plant. Greenwood promised to do his best to protect them. On the following day I communicated this to the newspapers concerned and subsequently received a letter of thanks.

3RD (SUNDAY).—Motored to Trent to spend the day. At lunch Macnamara strongly insisted that the Government did not contain men who really understood what the working-classes wanted—men who were really in touch with them. This was strongly controverted by Greenwood, who said that no Government had contained so many self-made men. Macnamara admitted this, but said that no member of the Government had really risen from the working-classes. He expressed much regret that Barnes had left the Cabinet and urged that an attempt should be made to bring in some of the Labour members. I said this would be impossible, as Labour would not agree to anything of the sort, and that the proper trend of events would be a largely increased representation of Labour in the House of Commons. It was most desirable that there should be 150 or 200 Labour members in the House so that

<sup>1</sup>Ex-service recruits drafted into the Royal Irish Constabulary.



there would be a real Opposition, representing the disgruntled and dissatisfied classes of the community, who now have only a small representation in the House.

L. G. agreed with this and added that a real Opposition was essential to the Government of the country—an Opposition which would represent the other view. He, however, joined with Greenwood in controverting Macnamara's statement that the Cabinet did not really understand what Labour wanted. He said that all great reforms had been effected by men in a higher grade than the class affected by the reform. He gave various instances.

I said no doubt this was true, but it was useless to contend that men like ourselves, however sympathetic, were actually in touch with the views and requirements of the working-classes.

L. G. : If you have been poor, you never forget it. The remembrance always remains with you and always colours your views.

I said this might be true in a general sense, but that the lapse of thirty years made a great change. One's sentiments might be benevolent, but one might not know exactly where the shoe pinched.

Subsequently, when talking privately with Macnamara, I asked him whether he thought that L. G. really understood the working-classes—the mechanics and people of that sort.

Macnamara replied that he did not think L. G. had ever really understood the mechanic class, as he had only seen them from the outside. Macnamara is very apprehensive regarding the coming winter. He thinks there will be serious unemployment, and ascribes this in some measure to the restriction of credit by the banks. I told him that several of the trade unions had proposed that Labour should be represented on the Board of the Bank of England, in order that Labour's point of view might be considered.

Macnamara said this would be a most desirable innovation, as financial, commercial and social problems were interwoven. Credit is restricted and men are thrown out of work in consequence. Then the Government and local authorities have to find work for them. Macnamara is strongly of opinion that if

there is trouble, ex-soldiers will be at the head of it. He said they feel that their services have not been adequately recognised, and that they are entitled to demand work. As he put it, "They are likely to be the spear-head of dissatisfaction."

Macnamara seems to be doing his job well. He is one of the few Ministers in close touch with the working and poorer classes. He lives in a little house in Camberwell. He agrees that housing is one of the chief causes of revolutionary sentiments and says the campaign has been badly managed.

L. G. was busy preparing his speeches for Carnarvon next week and the typewriter was clicking away busily in one of the rooms.

Trent Park is a fine house, and although I did not say so I could not help feeling that it was difficult when living in such surroundings to appreciate the point of view of a man with a wife and four children who is getting £4 10s. or so per week and has to pay perhaps £2 for a pair of boots.

In the evening L. G. devoted himself to singing Welsh hymns with much gusto, and to see and hear him one would never have thought that he was burdened with so many serious problems, and that he was—so it was alleged—being stalked by assassins.

16TH.—Golfed with L. G. at St. George's Hill. Much talk about the coal strike. I said it was a great pity no settlement had been arrived at, and that if the strike continued serious complications would arise with the other unions. I also prophesied a settlement.

L. G. did not take my view, and expressed the opinion that there was bound to be a row. It had got to come.

17TH (SUNDAY).—Dined with L. G. at Cobham. Sir Arthur Crosfield and his wife were there. Again much talk about the strike. L. G. said trouble was bound to come. These sentiments were heartily applauded by Sir Arthur.

I said I doubted whether the Government quite realised what a strike meant and that it looked as if the railway men and transport workers would support the colliers.

L. G. : Do you mean to say that men who are getting £3 per week are going to strike in order to enable men who are getting £4 10s. to get £4 18s ?

R. : It is a question of trade union psychology. You will find that when it comes to the point all the trade unions will stand together, irrespective of their wages and special conditions of employment. They will not allow the colliers to be beaten without a struggle.

During the week, strike in full blast. Several interviews with Hartshorn and Brace. As I anticipated, efforts are now being made to arrive at a settlement. Secret meetings have been taking place between L. G., Brace, Hartshorn and Hodges. I have been taking an active part in some of the discussions between the miners' leaders and the officials.

23RD.—Golfed with L. G., Eric Geddes and Sassoon at St. George's Hill. The P.M. very anxious about the strike, as the railway men have threatened to come out to-morrow night. Before we started, numerous telephone calls from Bonar Law and Horne, asking L. G. to come to town. He was, however, determined to have his game of golf, and gave instructions over the telephone as to what should be done. It was decided to write a letter to the miners, saying that the Government were still willing to negotiate. Numerous telephone messages also with regard to the condition of the Lord Mayor of Cork. What a life a Prime Minister leads !

The Northcliffe Press to-day are all out for a settlement of the strike and certain sections of the employers have told the Government that an early settlement is essential.

We returned to Cobham for tea, and I afterwards drove to London with L. G.. We had a long chat. Evidently he was very uncomfortable about the strike situation. He said, "I was only called in after the battle-line had been set. It was Horne's business. Everyone said, 'Let him have a free hand!' So I stood aside, and now I have to shoulder the burden. I don't want to be the one to down the working-man. I lived with working-men in my boyhood. They were my companions. I sympathise with them. I am all for a fair settlement, but of course we must have more output."

We discussed the various Ministers. He said that Greenwood had made a first-rate speech on the Irish question—good from every point of view.

26TH.—Long talk with Noble Hall, who has been travelling

about Europe interviewing statesmen for *The Times*. He told me interesting things about Millerand. He says that Millerand was a journalist, and that he, Noble Hall, was on a paper with him thirty years ago and knows him well. He dined with Millerand at Aix-les-Bains, when the latter was there meeting Giolitti. The following statement by Noble Hall shows what wrong impressions people get. At the Spa Conference, Millerand was most anxious to leave to attend some national demonstration or thanksgiving in France. L. G. and the other delegates were most anxious that he should not go. At one of the meetings L. G. chaffed Millerand and said that the settlement of the affairs of Europe was to be delayed so that he might receive the plaudits of the French crowd, and that when he, L. G., returned home, he would have to tell the British Parliament that the work had not been completed because M. Millerand had not been prepared to miss the applause of his fellow-countrymen at a fête. The members of the British Mission thought this a wonderful speech, and L. G. was congratulated on all hands on his diplomacy, wit and delicate handling. Millerand told Noble Hall that he was much annoyed at L. G.'s speech ; that he thought he was making fun of him on a serious occasion, and that ever since that day he had mistrusted L. G. as a serious man, etc.. In fact, Noble Hall remarked, " Lately L. G. and Millerand have not been getting on well together. It all dates from this incident, and only shows the grave importance of never chaffing foreigners, who do not understand banter, especially in another language. They may chaff each other, but they do it according to the custom of the country, and do not like a form of badinage which they imperfectly understand, and upon which they place the worst construction."

## Chapter XXIX

*Dramatic story of the 1914 retreat—Lord French on the Battle of the Marne—L. G. angry with France—President Wilson's place in history—The importance of Russia—The return of King Constantine.*

NOVEMBER 2ND, 1920.—Attended Press lunch to Burnham on his return from Canada, where he has been acting as leader of the British Delegation at a meeting of the Empire Press Union. He made an admirable leader. It was a pleasant luncheon with many compliments flying about. Northcliffe was in the chair. He and I both referred in eulogistic terms to Burnham's public work and self-sacrificing efforts in the interests of the trade. As usual, B. made an excellent speech. N. was in good form. In his speech he facetiously remarked that if it had not been for me the nation would not have known there was a war. He also said that my peerage had been thoroughly well earned.

In proposing his health I referred to the improvement he had effected in journalistic remuneration and conditions of work. I also said that in the war he had only one motive—victory, and that he had been prepared to make any sacrifice to secure that end.

5TH.—Went to France with Lord Midleton and other members of the War Memorials Commission to consider the sites and form of memorials. Found Midleton hard-working, energetic and good company. He told several amusing stories. One related to the late Lord Salisbury, who was much averse to kissing. When his grandchildren tried to kiss him he would reprove them for having contracted such a dirty habit. (I must try to find out the effect of this early training.)

Macdonogh,<sup>1</sup> the Adjutant-General, a member of the party, who had been head of the Intelligence Department

<sup>1</sup>Lt.-Gen. Sir George Macdonogh, Director of Military Intelligence, 1916-18; Adjutant-General, 1918-22.

until recently, related interesting details regarding the eventful period during August and September 1914. He said that our army was completely disorganised and that Lord French had determined to retreat thirty or forty miles beyond Paris to refit. Indeed, there was some idea of taking the army back to England for the purpose.

Jack Seely, another member of the party, told me that he and others had remonstrated with French. He himself had been instructed by French to make arrangements for housing the army at some place on the other side of Paris.

To continue Macdonogh's statement—French communicated his intentions to the Government, who at once sent Kitchener to Paris with authority to instruct French to make a stand. I think this was on September 1st. On the 5th, Macdonogh was present at a meeting between Joffre and French, when Joffre put his two hands in French's hands and begged him to turn and fight with the French army, which French agreed to do. Macdonogh said it was a dramatic, affecting scene.

Macdonogh threw interesting light on the war propaganda of the belligerents on both sides, which made me hate war more than ever. I asked him what he thought were the qualities for a great military commander. He said the two O's—obstinacy and optimism—were very important.

In addition to inspecting the sites with us, Macdonogh came to France for the purpose of arranging for the selection and transport of the body of the Unknown Warrior, which was brought from the Ypres salient. The following letter from French to Lord Midleton is worth recording :

Viceregal Lodge,  
Dublin.

3rd November, 1920.

My dear Midleton,

In continuance of my letter of 11th October, I think the Mons Retreat might well be commemorated by the erection of a monument at St. Quentin. This place was a kind of focus towards which the units rallied which were scattered and disorganised by the early battles of the Retreat.

I hold that one of the most critical points in our line during the battle of the Marne was the northern bank of that river, just above La Ferté-sous-Jouarre. It is close to the point where the Ourcq joins the Marne.

In the angle formed by these two rivers the Germans established a mass of guns which at the crux of the battle was severely hampering Manoury in his endeavour to make headway across the Ourcq.

Pulteney attacked La Ferté-sous-Jouarre with the 3rd Corps and succeeded in ousting these guns. His successful passage of the Marne at this difficult point and after severe fighting was of enormous help to Manoury in his successful passage of the Ourcq.

I think, therefore, that to commemorate the Battle of the Marne no better spot could be found than the high ground above La Ferté-sous-Jouarre. It is a good site. The place has great historical interest because Napoleon several times crossed and re-crossed the Marne at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre in that wonderful series of manœuvres which he executed in the campaign of 1814.

Yours very sincerely,  
(sgd.) FRENCH.

I was away five days. The French have made wonderful progress. When in Paris, Northcliffe called. I was out, but he left a card asking me to see him at his hotel, which I did. I had tea with him and Lady N.. He said nothing about L. G. or the dispute, nor did I. N. was much perturbed about the state of Ireland. He said that an improvement could be effected if proper steps were taken, but did not indicate what these were, and I did not press him, as he did not volunteer the information. He referred several times to the penalty of getting fat, and as I left gave me the parting injunction, "Take care and don't get fat!"

Lady N. was very pleasant.

N. and I talked much about the American Navy.

Later by accident I met Sir Tennyson d'Eyncourt, the Chief Naval Constructor, who said the chief danger was that, unless we renewed our battleships, we should be left with an old-fashioned Navy while the Americans would have a modern one. On my return, I repeated this conversation to L. G..

Northcliffe told me at the Burnham lunch that he meant to take things easier and did not mean to go on working as he had been doing. But evidently he was working hard in Paris.

He has a very quick eye and is quick to seize an opportunity. I watched him crossing the streets in Paris. He was much quicker than I was to take advantage of openings in the traffic, but he might easily be that, as I am on the cautious side in these matters.

7TH (SUNDAY).—Went with Marshal Foch, Fisher, the High Commissioner for Australia,<sup>1</sup> and the other members of our party to the unveiling of the memorial to the Australians in Amiens Cathedral. A remarkable ceremony which led to a sort of reunion between the Cathedral dignitaries and the municipal authorities of Amiens. I marched in the procession almost shoulder to shoulder with Foch—a curious experience. He was very pleasant as usual. The R.C. Church do these things on a grand scale. As the priests in their gorgeous vestments stood on the steps awaiting our arrival, they presented a wonderful sight, enhanced by the famous stained glass windows as a background.

13TH.—Spent the day with L. G. at Trent Park. The Greenwoods and Kerr were also there. L. G. was very angry with the French, and again repeated that France is anxious to resume her position as military dictator of Europe. He admitted, however, that Foch is an honest patriot who believes there will be another war, and that the French must be prepared for it. He again discussed the old question of the Rhine boundary and explained the reasons which had led him, Clemenceau and Wilson to decide in favour of the arrangements defined by the Treaty in preference to the adoption of Foch's plan of placing the bridgeheads over the Rhine in the possession of the French. L. G. repeated his old argument about the creation of another Alsace-Lorraine. I said I did not believe the French people were unfriendly to us and that when in France my colleagues and I had received the greatest kindness on all hands. This, however, did not convince L. G., who is very anti-French just now.

The American Ambassador, J. W. Davis, and his wife arrived in the evening—very nice people. He says he will return to the Bar when his term of office expires in March next. I asked him how he came to be such a good speaker. He

<sup>1</sup>The Rt. Hon. Andrew Fisher, High Commissioner, 1915-21; d. 1922.



said that his father, also a lawyer, was a good speaker, and that he learned from him, in addition to which he had had considerable practice at the Bar and in public life in America. He rarely used notes and seldom prepared his speeches.

14TH (SUNDAY).—Again spent the day at Trent Park with the P.M.. Played golf with him and the American Ambassador, to whom L. G. put many questions regarding the state of public affairs in America and American public men.

There was much talk as to the position President Wilson will occupy in history. L. G. asked my opinion. I said he is certain to be a big figure in view of what he did. He kept America out of the war until the Germans forced her into it and thus converted her from a debtor country into a creditor country—an event of great historic importance. Meanwhile he made eloquent speeches justifying America's attitude. He took a leading part in deposing the Kaiser and was one of the three great figures at the Peace Conference. The Fourteen Points in a measure formed the basis of the Conference and make an historic document. Wilson's position will, however, depend to some extent upon the success of the League of Nations. If it proves successful and if in years to come it is an essential part of international machinery, his prestige will be much increased, whereas if it proves a failure the contrary will apply.

L. G. and Davis agreed with this. L. G. said he felt sure Wilson would occupy a great place in history. Neither he (L. G.) nor Clemenceau had done any special thing in connection with the Peace Conference which could be ear-marked as his work, whereas, for better or worse, Wilson had advocated an idea which had been embodied in the League of Nations. The League might fail, but it would be an historic fact. Davis agreed with this.

Much talk about Russia.

L. G. : The collapse and condition of Russia are at the moment the two most important items in the international situation. There is every prospect that Russia may sink into complete anarchy. Unless the Russians can improve their transport, and re-create a portion of their trade, the country is doomed. This is one of those cases in which one feels that one

cannot stand aside. One must do something to endeavour to avert such a catastrophe.

He then went on to discuss the feasibility of opening up trade. He said Lenin and Company would, he thought, be prepared to give assurances to respect the rights of traders, concessionaires, etc.. Davis and I said, "What is such an assurance worth from fanatics?" L. G. said he thought Lenin and Company would respect their word. He, however, gave a vivid account of the fanatical qualities of Lenin and the 200,000 members of the Bolshevist society who act with him and really control Russia, in so far as it is controlled. L. G. said he thought traders would be prepared to invest capital in the country and spoke in very optimistic terms. Davis and I expressed disagreement, but admitted that traders might be willing to barter commodities for Russian jewels, gold, etc.. L. G. seemed cheered by this prospect. He may be right, but both Davis and I doubted whether any large amount of capital would be invested in Russia. We pointed out that in England and America the bankers and traders have quite enough to do to find capital for their own undertakings. L. G. admitted this, but said there are men who like a gamble with the prospect of large future profits. Davis and I suggested that Russia was not the country for a long shot in the way of commercial enterprise. We said that if we were to trade with Russia we should dash over the border with our commodities, exchange them for pearls, diamonds and gold, and rush back again as soon as possible.

Two enjoyable and interesting days. L. G. shows wonderful courage. He said that Carson is first on the list for assassination, and that he, L. G., comes second. He repeated what he has said before, viz. that if Fate intends that you shall be killed, you will; and that if it doesn't, you won't—not a bad doctrine for a threatened man!

20TH.—Spent the week-end at Lympne with L. G., in a small house belonging to Sassoon, adjacent to the house where the Peace Conference meetings were held.

L. G. and I golfed on Saturday afternoon at Hythe and on Sunday at Littlestone.

L. G. said the whole tendency of the world was reactionary.

People wished to be let alone. They did not want remedial legislation. This he regretted, being a Liberal. He thought there would be a revulsion later on in favour of reform, and that in this country we should forestall this by passing legislation for the benefit of the people. He said the present state of feeling was the natural aftermath of the war, and that the action of the Bolsheviks had contributed to produce this effect.

On Sunday L. G. and I spent several hours alone. He said that a dinner of a few leading bankers was to be held next week to consider the financial and labour positions. He asked my opinion about cultivating the goodwill of certain important people. I said there was no occasion for him to pay court to anyone, and that he really depended upon the acts of the Government. I said, "If you go straight forward and do what is best in the interests of the country and do it well, the people will back you up, whatever anyone says."

The news of the Irish murders came by telephone on Sunday evening. L. G. much concerned and from time to time very busy on the telephone, but meanwhile he read the book he was reading when the news came as if nothing had happened, and related several of the short stories he had been reading. He has a wonderful power of repeating a story to advantage, and it usually sounds much better than it reads in the original.

We had an interesting talk about the first days of the war. He said Kitchener's visit to Paris in September 1914 was due to him, L. G.. The news kept coming in that we were retreating and retreating, but that our losses were comparatively small. L. G. said, "The whole thing is inexplicable. It must be enquired into. Why are we retreating if we are not losing heavily?" He suggested that K. should go to France, which he did.

27TH.—Played a few holes with L. G. and Sassoon at Coombe Hill. L. G. said that Leygues, the new French Prime Minister,<sup>1</sup> was rather like Clemenceau in appearance—a kind of attenuated Clemenceau. But his style of oratory and methods

<sup>1</sup> Georges Leygues, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Sept. 1920–21; d. 1933.

were different. He spoke at great length. He was meeting Leygues again in the afternoon.

When I saw L. G. on the following day he said that Leygues improved on acquaintance, and that he had considerable difficulties to face. L. G. added, "I sympathise with him!" L. G. told me there was very little difference between the English and French policies regarding Constantine's<sup>1</sup> return. Neither nation was prepared to take naval or military action, and both recognised that the Greeks were entitled to select their own rulers. The proposal is to tell them that the Allies do not approve of the appointment of Constantine, and that if he is appointed they will not regard Greece in the same friendly spirit as they otherwise would. Having regard to Constantine's record, there will be a feeling of suspicion and uneasiness which will be calculated to interfere with amicable relations between the Allies and the Greeks. L. G. said that Leygues was not as brilliant as Clemenceau or Briand or as capable as Millerand, but that he appeared to be honest and straightforward and anxious to do what was fair and right. When talking of Greece, L. G. remarked, "The Allies cannot manage the affairs of Europe. Each country must manage its own affairs"—a sentiment which I heartily applauded.

On Sunday, November 28th, L. G. and I went to St. George's Hill to play golf, but the weather was so bad that we could not go out. I had a long talk with him about various matters. L. G. returned to town and I drove back with him as far as Wimbledon. He said, "I hate to be alone. I always like a companion."

We had an interesting chat about L. G. himself. I said, "You love giving out your best. It does not matter who may be there. It may be some quite insignificant person, but if he or she appeals to you for the time being you will do your utmost to be interesting. You relate what you have been doing, what important people have said to you, recount amusing incidents, and often, if I may say so, are very indiscreet."

L. G. (laughing): Yes, often very indiscreet. What you say is correct. If anyone appeals to me it is no effort to

<sup>1</sup> King Constantine of Greece, expelled in June 1917; recalled by plebiscite, December 1920; abdicated, September 1922, and died in January 1923.

endeavour to amuse him or her. I may never see the person again, but I always remember the pleasant conversation and if we should meet again, perhaps years afterwards, I like to cast my mind back and recall what took place at our previous meeting.

## Chapter XXX

*Our war memorials in France—Northcliffe as Viceroy of Ireland ?  
—The Jutland Report—A storm at the Munitions Ministry—  
F. E.'s encounter with President Wilson.*

DECEMBER 11TH, 1920.—L. G. staying the week-end at Arnos Grove, Middlesex, with Inverforth. I motored down with him and Reading and spent the day, golfing in the afternoon on the small course attached to the house.

The conversation turned on re-reading books. L. G. said this was one of his great pleasures. He liked to read favourites over and over again, and always found fresh points of interest. At present he was re-reading some of R. L. Stevenson's books.

We talked about Ireland. L. G. said he thought the gunmen were being got under, and that before long he would be able to negotiate. This was on the road to Arnos Grove. In the afternoon, L. G. was called to the telephone. He came back looking very gloomy and became very silent. The Cork burning outrages took place the next evening, following upon certain shootings by the Sinn Feiners. I did not ask what the telephone message was about, but should think it related to bad news from Ireland. I mention this to show the sort of life a Prime Minister leads now-a-days.

17TH.—Attended meeting of War Memorials Committee at which it was decided to erect three memorials—one at Ypres, to commemorate the British effort in Belgium ; one at Ferté-sous-Jouarre, to commemorate the early events of the war ; and a third to commemorate the subsequent fighting in France. The chairman, Lord Midleton, suggested this should be erected at Pozières on the Somme. I strongly opposed the suggestion on the ground that the memorial should be erected in some central position in order to commemorate the whole of the fighting, and not one particular battle. Also that it should be erected in a place easy of access to the public. Also that it should be erected in a well-known town, where it would strike

the imagination of the French and be a perpetual reminder of what had been done by the British troops. I suggested that the memorial should be erected in Amiens. After considerable discussion the whole of the members, with the exception of the chairman, agreed. I felt sorry to take a view different from that of Middleton, who is a most courteous, considerate chairman, and most anxious to do the right thing. However, I am sure he is wrong about this.

18TH.—Week-end at Trent Park with L. G., Lord Dawson, Mrs. Rupert Beckett and Miss Stevenson. I arrived on Saturday night for dinner and left on Monday morning, when the party broke up.

L. G. gave a graphic account of a dinner which he had attended at Bonar Law's. Beaverbrook, Hamar Greenwood and, I think, one or two more were present.

L. G. : I went determined to have some fun. Someone said, "Who would be the best Viceroy for Ireland when the Home Rule Bill comes into force?" I at once replied, "Northcliffe, the most eminent Irishman living. He has all the qualities for the post. He would not do at a time like this, but he would do well in the rôle of the great pacifier. He is energetic and can make himself very pleasant, and he is a man with big ideas. Furthermore, he has no history at the back of him which would tend to dim his efforts. He would come fresh to the task." When I said this, they could not believe their ears. B. L. said, "Whose leg are you pulling now?" I said, "No one's! I am perfectly serious!"

We had a long talk about the Navy. The Jutland Report came out this week. L. G. said that Jellicoe made a good show, and that on the whole the papers had been judicial in their criticism. Jellicoe's memorandum of October 1914 was a remarkable document, and went far to relieve him of responsibility for turning away from the German Fleet. That was the considered policy of the Admiralty, and Jellicoe had acted upon it, as he had said he would. If the policy was wrong, the Admiralty were responsible. The public had not noted the full significance of the Report regarding the defects of our battleship construction, guns and shells—very important items for which Jellicoe himself was perhaps in a measure

responsible, as he had been at the Admiralty when these things were planned. Our mines, submarines and submarine defences were also ineffective. In fact, we had very few mines and those we had would not work properly.

We talked about the present naval programme, the subject of much discussion.

L. G. : It would be a great mistake for the country to engage in a big ship-building programme at the moment. Naval construction is in a fluid state. We must ascertain how best we can spend our money. It would be ruinous to make a mistake in policy. Last week I went to see Lord Pirrie, who said that oil is too expensive for fuel for ships. No doubt he is right in reference to commercial shipping, but different considerations apply to the Navy. What you want is efficiency, and if you get it, an extra five per cent. expense does not really matter, particularly if you save in other directions, i.e. in the size of the ships and the weight to be carried, etc..

R. : America has been guilty of a great act of betrayal. In Paris she started the talk of universal peace and a League of Nations. Now she is the only great nation which has not joined the League, and she is busy building a huge Navy. The League of Nations was stultified when the decision was arrived at not to deal with the production of armaments.

L. G. agreed. He said, "The League of Nations is, I regret to say, deceptive and dangerous. They cannot even protect a little nation like Armenia. They do nothing but pass useless resolutions."

L. G. said that Beatty was strongly in favour of the capital ship policy. He further said that the men who had devised the method of dealing with submarines had been sent abroad to foreign stations, instead of being kept at the Admiralty as they should have been. Many of the best minds were being distributed throughout the world instead of being concentrated in Whitehall to consider new problems.

Lord Dawson made an amusing remark regarding the two chows at Trent. He said that chows are not really dogs at all. They are most calculating creatures, and carefully consider with whom they shall make friends and how much attention they shall pay to each.



21ST.—Lunched with Inverforth and Howard Frank.<sup>1</sup> Both much perturbed, as well they might be, regarding a report made on the Ministry of Munitions by a Committee set up by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Frank was very militant—Inverforth very serious. It appears that the report is to be published in a day or two. I told Inverforth and Frank it would cause a sensation. Inverforth said all the officials wished to resign. I advised Inverforth and Frank to see L. G. and Bonar Law. Later I saw Inverforth again, when he said he had seen L. G., who had spoken strongly about the report. Inverforth had handed him the resignations of all the officials at the Ministry. I suppose L. G. is going to make a statement in the House. Inverforth thanked me for my advice. He said he and Frank were staying on only to oblige the Government.

At night as I was going to the House of Lords I met the Attorney-General (Sir Gordon Hewart), Beaverbrook and Chilcott, who asked me to go to the Lord Chancellor's room, where we sat and talked for an hour. F. E. in great form. He said he would like to see how I looked in his wig and gown. I put them on. F. E. remarked that I would make a good Lord Chancellor, but would look rather severe.

The conversation at the beginning turned mostly on tennis. The Lord Chancellor made a match for him and Guest to play Beaverbrook and his wife, the Lord Chancellor and his partner conceding odds and betting Beaverbrook £100 to £50.

Then we had some talk about President Wilson. F. E. very bitter against him. He said that when he went to see the President in America, he was never asked to sit down and the President never raised any topic of conversation until F. E. was about to leave. Then Wilson asked him whether it was true that he had been a Professor at Oxford. F. E. said, "Yes." Wilson then enquired what subjects he taught, and ultimately what tendency the young men of the day showed. F. E., who was very angry, replied, "A great tendency to drink," and then walked out of the room.

The Lord Chancellor gave a humorous account of an

<sup>1</sup> Sir Howard Frank; d. 1932.

alleged interview between the Attorney-General and Winston at the Hôtel Majestic. Winston wanted to bring an action for libel against some newspaper. The Attorney-General as a friend explained in his usual gentle manner that this was impossible, whereupon Winston remarked in a loud voice, "That shows that the law is bankrupt—absolutely bankrupt! It is a case of complete bankruptcy!"

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1920.—Spent the afternoon and dined with the P.M. at Downing Street. Rather a gloomy proceeding, strongly impregnated with the atmosphere of the offices downstairs—the sort of Christmas a shopkeeper spends when he eats his Christmas dinner on the counter surrounded by his goods. Captain Evans was there, and Vincent Evans as customary—also Miss Stevenson. Later Dr. Macnamara and his wife and Dr. and Mrs. Terry arrived. (Dr. Terry<sup>1</sup> is the celebrated Roman Catholic organist attached to Westminster Cathedral.) During the afternoon the P.M. and Macnamara attended a conference downstairs on unemployment. Much of the talk was on this subject, interspersed with songs.

The P.M. was in fairly good spirits, but the festivity had an unnatural air. After dinner Dr. Terry performed with great effect on the piano. The P.M. took much interest in this part of the proceedings. He suggested that the time had come for a really national hymn-book, containing nothing but the best hymns and hymn-tunes, irrespective of tradition or private influence. Dr. Terry fully agreed.

After dinner Bonar Law and General and Lady Sykes arrived. They were asked to dinner but preferred to dine at No. 12. I had to go early, and met Bonar Law in the hall. He greeted me with the characteristic remark, "Where is the noise going on?" referring to the music, for which he has no liking.

Macnamara very gloomy about unemployment. He says the next three months will put the Government to a serious test. He doubts whether the Cabinet appreciate the strength of the feelings of the ex-soldiers, and that they will be the ones who will cause the most trouble. He added, "They have the most justification!" He said he was worn out with

<sup>1</sup>Now Sir Richard Terry.

negotiations with the building trade, and convinced that the trade unions did not mean to accept the Government's offer.

On Monday, December 27th, I played golf with L. G. and told him about this. He said, "It is a difficult problem. The truth is that masters and men are not keen about any change. They are all doing well, and want to keep the business to themselves."

## Chapter XXXI

*Why American politicians talk platitudes—Currency difficulties—  
A better outlook in Ireland—The Press and the Police—A  
house-warming at Chequers—Some autobiographical revelations—  
Foreign Office shortcomings.*

JANUARY 1ST, 1921.—At Lympe, with L. G., Winston, Sir William Sutherland and Miss Stevenson. The Greenwoods came on Sunday. L. G. and Winston in great form. Sutherland brought with him gramophone records of speeches made by Harding, the American President-Elect, and other American politicians. We all sat round and listened to platitudes delivered through the gramophone horn. The interjections of the P.M. and Winston, shouted into the horn as the speeches progressed, most amusing.

Winston said that American politicians have to confine themselves to platitudes because the politician usually represents a compromise. It is not safe to go far beyond, "The sun shone yesterday upon this great and glorious country. It shines to-day and will shine to-morrow." L. G. said that Harding's speech on American naval aspirations made him feel that he would pawn his shirt rather than allow America to dominate the seas. If this was to be the outcome of the League of Nations propaganda, he was sorry for the world and in particular for America. L. G. always shines in a discussion of this sort. Whatever his defects may be, he is a real patriot where British rights are concerned.

We talked of the naval enquiry now proceeding before the Cabinet Committee, of which Winston is a member.

On the Saturday and Sunday evenings after dinner we had some lusty singing, everyone joining in the choruses. L. G. sang "Cockles and Mussels" and two or three other songs with great effect. He would have made a fortune on the music-hall stage. Winston sat watching him with the keenest admiration and the eye of an artist. He said, referring to L. G.,

"What a wonderful man he is ! What an actor he would have made !" The great success of the performance was "Rule, Britannia !" which we all sang with special reference to the American Fleet. Winston read the words out to us several times and insisted upon their beauty and patriotic fervour. He remarked, "The last two verses would make a splendid peroration."

Sutherland described Winston as an artist in words—not a bad description. He has a wonderful verbal memory, and with much gusto regaled us by reciting numerous music-hall songs and other verses, which he remembered with little effort, although he had not heard many of them for years. His painting has greatly improved and it is interesting to hear him descant as an artist upon the allegorical scenes depicted on the walls and ceilings of Sassoon's drawing-room.

On Saturday afternoon L. G. went off to rest with a bundle of official papers. Winston remarked on the tireless industry of the P.M..

Much talk about Ireland. L. G. said that the Home Rule Act was the most important measure the Government had passed, and that he thought de Valera recognised this. He had returned to Ireland, first, because he felt that the militant Sinn Feiners had been beaten, and second, because he was anxious to capture the Irish Parliament and be in a position to say, "Look what we compelled them to give you !"

Winston expressed himself as being strongly in favour of granting the fullest financial concessions to the Irish. He said it would be worth it, as the Irish question was doing us much injury abroad. He added, laughing, "Why not offer to transfer to Ireland so many hundred millions of the debt we owe to America ?"

We had a long talk concerning the commercial position, unemployment, currency, international debts, etc..

L. G. said it looked as if Great Britain were going to be the only European country that was going to meet her obligations. Other countries were endeavouring to dodge them by increasing the currency, etc..

R. : At the moment the most important thing is to revive our foreign trade. (A rather obvious observation, R.)

L. G. said the great difficulty was to secure the right people to advise. Most business men worked in such small compartments that they were unable to take wide views and deal with the whole situation. He further said that the Germans were inflating their currency with a view to paying off their debts at a cheap rate. He also told us that while our bankers were all for deflation the commercial men did not favour this.

Sutherland suggested that, as a preliminary, trade with Australia and the other Dominions might be revived.

We had a long talk about currency. I mentioned the enormous transactions of the Bankers' Clearing House as indicating that the amount of currency is no real index of the nation's dealings.

I suggested that L. G. should set up a committee to investigate the whole currency question, the committee to comprise not only bankers, but commercial men of different grades and Labour leaders. He thought well of this proposal.

I had a long talk with Winston about his book. He says he has written a great part of the first volume. He proposes to dictate 300,000 words, and then cut down the matter and polish it up. He added that it was very exhilarating to feel that one was writing for half a crown a word !

He went upstairs to put in two or three hours' work on the book. When he came down, I said to L. G., with whom I had been talking, "It is a horrible thought that while we have been frittering away our time, Winston has been piling up words at half a crown each." This much amused L. G..

More talk about Ireland after Greenwood's arrival. He said the time had not arrived for a settlement. He was pushing on with the arrangements for holding the Irish Parliaments. He hoped that when the elections were held, Ireland would be in such a state that the electors would be able to record their votes without fear or favour. He also hoped that independent candidates would come forward in the South and that a representative Parliament would be elected. He added, "If we effect a premature settlement we may lose the benefit of all we have done. Ireland has been terrorised. We must free her from the terror. There are already signs that the Irish people are breathing more freely."

Winston gave a graphic account of his experiences with General Tudor (now in Ireland) in the war. One day he took Winston to see a bombardment. The firing on both sides was terrific—the worst Winston had ever experienced. The little party moved their position in the trenches at Tudor's instigation. A few minutes afterwards the part of the trench in which they had been sitting was blown up. Winston said Tudor was quite unconcerned.

6TH.—Gave evidence before a committee appointed by General Horwood,<sup>1</sup> Chief Commissioner of Metropolitan Police, to consider the relations of the Press and Police Force.

The people at Scotland Yard are much concerned about the activities of the Press, and on the other hand there is a movement at the Yard to issue more information. The committee wanted to know whether I thought the newspapers would agree to certain rules as to what should and should not be published regarding forthcoming trials, etc.. I replied in the negative, but said that the Press were just as anxious as the Police to see that justice was fairly administered and would pay due attention to any reasonable request made to them by the Chief Commissioner, either generally or in relation to any specific case.

Later I had a long talk with General Horwood himself. I told him what I had said, and he agreed with my view. He remarked that when the committee made their report he would write a letter setting forth his views. I asked him what he thought of the industrial situation. He said, "If we can get over March 31st, I think everything will be all right. The genuine unemployed are quite reasonable." He had got into touch with the four chief organisations representing them in London with most satisfactory results, but the unemployable were out to give trouble and were no doubt backed with Bolshevik money. His chief difficulty was the action of some of the magistrates, which was causing the gravest dissatisfaction among the police, who wanted to know why men found with daggers and razors for use against the police should be let off with trivial punishments such as binding over.

<sup>1</sup>Now Brig.-Gen. Sir William Horwood; Commissioner Metropolitan Police, 1920-28.

8TH—At Chequers. The P.M.'s house-warming party. Davis, the American Ambassador, and his wife, Reading, Milner, Dawson, the Greenwoods, Horne, Lord and Lady Lee, the P.M. and Megan were there or on the way when I arrived about 7 o'clock. Mrs. L. G. arrives to-morrow morning from North Wales. During dinner there were interesting biographical revelations. Reading, who has been appointed Viceroy, told us that the last time he visited India he was a cabin-boy on a sailing-ship. Now he returns as Viceroy. Milner was not very definite, but remarked that he thought he was born with a copper spoon in his mouth. Horne said he was the son of a poor Scottish parson in a mining village. Dawson said he started without any cash resources to speak of. Greenwood revealed that he had for a short time been a schoolmaster at a village school in Canada. L. G. and I said that we had been solicitors' penniless articled clerks. Curiously, we both had the same ambition, viz. to make £20,000 and to retire at seventy !

After dinner Lee made a speech of some length. He began by referring to the Spanish custom of saying to guests, "Everything here is yours," without of course meaning it. He said that on this occasion he could make the statement with perfect sincerity. In future, the house and its contents, dear as they were to Lady Lee and himself, would be the property of the Prime Minister and his successors. The final deed of gift was ready and would be signed after dinner. He referred to the peculiar charm of Chequers—to its quietude and peacefulness. He said the house had an undoubted personality which everyone felt who came there. He hoped that the Prime Minister and his successors would take full advantage of the house and give themselves up to its gentle influence. It represented a phase of English life which stood for much. It was well that this phase should be understood and appreciated by those who ruled over this great country.

In replying to Lee, the P.M. thanked him and Lady Lee for their self-sacrifice and abnegation. L. G. seemed rather embarrassed to begin with, and spoke in halting terms. (Afterwards he told me that he was very much embarrassed.) Then he launched out into an easier subject. He spoke of the trials and tribulations of public life, and in particular those of



Prime Ministers. He said he had read the lives of many Prime Ministers, all of whom thought their burdens almost insupportable. He thought he was justified in saying that the task of a Prime Minister at the present time was far more onerous than that of any of his predecessors. He referred to the violence and malignity of the Press, which he said made life almost intolerable, and made public men feel that they must turn round and claw their adversaries. (Suiting the action to the word, he turned round and made a very tiger-like claw.) He believed that Chequers would prove an aid and solace to Prime Ministers in their work. He made graceful references to the beauty of the place and the traditions by which it was surrounded. He said that in the early days of his political life he was an iconoclast. He said you must have men of that sort in politics at all times. But as he had grown older, and as he had had more experience, he had come to see that it was much easier to pull down than to build up, and that skilful builders were the clever people. Chequers represented hundreds of years of building typical of our great country. That was another reason why its influences would be valuable for Prime Ministers. After dinner Lee and Lady Lee signed the deed of gift, of which I was one of the witnesses, and signed their names in the Visitors' Book with an inscription, which was well done. After the deed was signed, Lee handed it to me and asked me to send it to the Secretary of the Trust. Then the generous donors drove away in the darkness. As Lee said good-bye to the P.M., he exclaimed, "Take care of it!"

The Lees were obviously much affected, as well they might be. The house represents an ideal and boundless love, labour and insight. The restoration work has been admirably done, and every picture and article of furniture has been selected and placed so as to produce the natural effect. I said afterwards that the ceremony reminded me of a nun taking the veil, voluntarily, but sadly, casting off her jewels, beautiful dresses and lovely hair.

I asked the P.M. if he would occupy Chequers if he were a Labour Prime Minister—whether he would feel that it would influence his actions and point of view. He said, "No, I would not occupy it. It would be inconsistent and would insensibly

affect one's mind." Beautiful as the house is and much as he admires it, I think he would be better pleased if it were smaller and more homely. When we were out walking, he pointed to a very moderate-sized house with a fine view which had been erected by Lawson Walton, and said smiling, "I should really prefer that. I would much rather have a fine view and a small house than a big house with no view. I love to see the beautiful, white, fleecy clouds touching the hills. That is what gives me most pleasure."

He has given up smoking for the time being because he thinks it is affecting his throat. He admitted that some months ago he felt very ill and thought he might be breaking up. He recovered and is better now than he has been for some time. This he attributes in some measure to giving up smoking. After each meal he carefully considers whether he will start again, but never does, although he lingers rather lovingly over the cigar-box for a few minutes.

Of course everyone congratulated Reading upon his appointment as Viceroy of India, which has made a new man of him. For some time past he has been on the gloomy side. Now he is like a schoolboy let out for a holiday. I asked him whether by reading the Law Reports he would be able to keep up his law while in India. He took me by the arm and whispered in my ear, "I will never look at a law report again if I can help it! I never want to see one."

He is a charming person—always the same and equally courteous to all classes. He is an adventurous sort of man and must have a wonderful nervous system.

I went for a walk with Milner, who told me he was tired out and determined to have a rest. He thinks that most of the Ministers are tired, but that most of them have not worked as long as he has done.

I said, "You would have made a first-class Viceroy of India."

He replied "Yes, if I had been ten years younger. Ten years makes a lot of difference at my time of life."

I repeated to L. G. that Milner would have made a good Viceroy. He agreed but said he was too old. He added, "I don't know whether he would have suited in these times. He

is an obstinate man when he comes to a decision. If he had come to a wrong decision the result might have been serious."

22ND.—Golfed with L. G. at Coombe Hill. In the afternoon we played a foursome with Davis, the American Ambassador, and Wright, one of the men in the Embassy. L. G. had a long talk with Davis about Harding and Hughes,<sup>1</sup> who is nominated as American Foreign Secretary. Davis thinks Hughes friendly to Great Britain and a fair-minded man.

L. G. said he would not have gone to Paris had Leygues remained Prime Minister, as he felt it quite useless to meet him. He (Leygues) was quite unequal to the situation. L. G. felt that he could always get the better of him if he tried, but had not attempted to do so, as he thought it would be unfair. Briand was a man of quite a different type.

We talked of the vacancies in the Cabinet. L. G. said it was very difficult to find men to fill them, there were so few of outstanding ability.

We returned to Downing Street to tea. Found some children there. L. G. very busy with the children, particularly a little girl—a pretty, clever little thing, who took a great fancy to me: What a thing vanity is ! I felt quite pleased by the mite's attention.

Talked with L. G. about German reparations. The Foreign Office yesterday issued a statement that the Germans had accepted the proposal for the payment of one hundred and fifty millions per annum, and that the prospects of the Conference were therefore bright. L. G. said the real difficulty was fixing the total sum—the French Government did not want to fix this as they did not want to inform the French public of the true position of affairs—that is that the sum receivable will be much less than they have been led to believe. In other words the Government do not want to let the French public know that they will have to bear a great part of the cost of the war themselves. The British Government, on the other hand, think there can be no effective settlement until the total has been fixed. L. G. expects a big fight on this point.

The information issued by the Foreign Office Press

<sup>1</sup>Charles Evans Hughes, U.S. Secretary of State 1921-25.

*January 1921]*

## THE PEACE CONFERENCE AND AFTER

Department is most unsatisfactory. Whether this is due to want of knowledge on the part of the F.O., or to the information not being communicated to the F.O. Press Department, I don't know. The result is the same. The French do these things much better. They give the Press complete information and pursue a regular system.

## Chapter XXXII

*Back to the Quai d'Orsay—The difficulty of making Germany pay—The aerial menace—French publicity methods and ours—Modern America—Plots against Sir Auckland Geddes—The Reparations Agreement signed—Briand as an orator.*

SUNDAY, JANUARY 23RD, 1921.—Travelled to Paris with the British Mission—L. G., Curzon, etc.. L. G. said that the six months he spent in Paris in 1919 was the happiest and most interesting period of his life. He had no doubt about that.

We had more talk about reparations. When we arrived in Paris, Briand met L. G. on the platform. They at once adjourned to the waiting-room, where they had a long talk, Curzon and one of the French Ministers being present. I drove with L. G. to the Hôtel Crillon. There was some difficulty in putting up the front seats in the car, which made the party look all of a heap. L. G. was much perturbed and remarked, "Do get the thing right! We must not arrive looking like a disorderly Sunday school!"

24TH.—Once more at the Quai d'Orsay, where as before I spent several long hours waiting for the conclusion of the proceedings. This time the meeting was held in the Salon d'Horloge. The rooms were hot as usual—much to L. G.'s annoyance. I held my Press meetings as customary and was warmly greeted.

One of the American newspapermen gave me an illuminating statement which he had received from French official sources describing the French point of view and policy regarding the Conference. I showed this to L. G., who was much interested and said he had rarely read such a frank and interesting document. Among other things, the writer said the French public are not ready for disillusionment on the subject of reparations, and for that reason it would be impossible for the French Government to agree to a fixed indemnity.

As we drove from the station last night, L. G. told me that Briand, who had been very pleasant, was evidently much impressed by his political difficulties, the chief of these being the deficiency in the French Budget and the difficulty of collecting a sufficient sum from Germany to balance the account. There is a very heavy Budget deficiency. L. G. said he doubted whether Briand had fathomed the difficulties regarding the German indemnity. He was not a man who went into details.

25TH.—Dined with L. G.. Long talk about reparations. He said the French would not face the facts and persisted in saying that Germany must pay so much in cash without indicating how the payment could be made without ruining French trade. I said I thought the time had come when another public statement should be made regarding the technical questions involved, in order to show the difficulty of collecting large sums from Germany whatever might be her liability. I said to L. G. that the public do not appreciate that a country can only pay her debts in gold, goods, services or bills of exchange drawn on other countries. L. G. agreed, and it was ultimately arranged that he should prepare materials for a speech. Hankey and Kerr also thought a public statement desirable. All France is seething with this question. The French politicians are full of promises, but the public do not understand the position, which has never been explained to them.

Yesterday the Conference after a long discussion referred the questions relating to the breaches of the naval, military and air clauses to experts to be presided over by Foch. Foch has now changed his mind regarding the air possibilities and has made a report, in which he says that the German aerial menace is more deadly than ever in its potential means of destruction, and that unless steps are taken to prevent the Germans from manufacturing aircraft they may at any minute destroy the *moral* of a nation by a sudden attack. General Groves, who was present at the Conference, was very bucked about this. Hitherto his has been a voice crying in the wilderness. To-day he repeated his former predictions and made our hair stand on end by telling us what would happen if the

Germans suddenly attacked London and Paris with 5,000 aeroplanes loaded with high explosive and poison bombs.

Had a long talk with Henry Wilson, who told me that he and Foch had settled the questions referred to them in an hour and had made a unanimous report.

HENRY WILSON : The Frocks talk and talk as usual and do nothing. Foch and I made a few mutual concessions and came to an arrangement without much difficulty. Soldiers may not be politicians or men of business, but they get things done.

We talked at length regarding our foreign policy. I said, "French policy is continuous and definite."

H. W. : We have no foreign policy. The F.O. is badly organised and incompetent. I told the P.M. so the other night. Soldiers have to pass numerous examinations in the course of their career. Their dossier is kept, and unless they prove their ability they don't get promotion. A clerk has to pass an examination to enter the F.O., but when once he gets there he is subjected to no further tests. L. G. was much impressed by what I said, but whether anything will be done, I don't know.

26TH.—A long talk on financial matters—exchange, currency, etc., with Worthington-Evans, who made shrewd observations. He is well up in the subject. He is to be the new Minister of War and is of course very proud of his new position. He is a capable man and very agreeable. I knew him nearly forty years ago when he was a solicitor's articled clerk.

Henry Wilson came to see me and wanted to know what I thought of Evans, and how I thought he would function at the War Office. I explained him as well as I could, and said I believed he would put the War Office case with energy and pertinacity, and also that he was a man who had not made many enemies either in the Government or in the Press. This was all to the good, as the War Office estimates would be enormous and would want a father who would not be attacked on personal grounds. Henry Wilson quite agreed. He tells me he is leaving the War Office in twelve months.

26TH.—Dined with L. G., Auckland Geddes, Hankey, Kerr, Miss Stevenson and J. T. Davies.

Owing to the meagre character of the information given out on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday I made strong representations as to the importance of more complete disclosure of the doings of the Conference. I pointed out that the French and British publics were misinformed as to the attitude of the P.M. and the British representatives, and that Paris was therefore full of false rumours and poison gas. I also showed by producing Havas messages, that French officials were not only giving out more information, but were selecting that which suited them, and indicating to the French Press what line it should take. The French journalists go every evening to the Quai d'Orsay, where they receive a well-considered statement, supported, when thought desirable, by documentary extracts. The P.M., Hankey and Kerr were much impressed by what I said, and it was arranged that on the following day Kerr should attend the Conference and take full notes so as to be in a position to supply me with an adequate report of the proceedings. The P.M. said there had been an agreement that nothing should be published beyond a bare statement of the decisions arrived at. I said that if this was the agreement it had not been acted upon, and that if the French were not giving out information the Italians or Belgians were doing so. An American journalist told me that Briand and Berthelot<sup>1</sup> had seen the French Press and made a communication to them, but requested them not to publish it, whereupon some of the French journalists said, "If we do not publish what you have given us, we can get the same particulars from other missions and publish what they supply."

Auckland Geddes gave the P.M. a graphic account of modern America. He said we are accustomed to judge the United States from what we hear from Americans in the East, and particularly those who come to Europe and are very like ourselves. But these people form only a very small part of the American population, and the real power lies in the West and Middle West. The power of the East is on the wane. The majority of the inhabitants of the West and Middle West know very little about England. They regard her with suspicion. Many of them do not speak English, and those who

<sup>1</sup>Philippe Berthelot, Secretary-General to French Foreign Office.



do, speak a lingo which an Englishman would find it difficult to understand. The Irish are powerful, and the Roman Catholic religion is making vast strides in America. It may be taken that most Americans of that faith are opposed to England. Geddes has had a very anxious time. He has had to be guarded continually by detectives, and his wife and children cannot go out unless similarly protected. There have been several plots to blow up the Embassy. When it was protected by police, there were nine separate explosions of the gas mains in the same night. They called these accidents. Whether they were he does not know. He thinks the position requires careful handling. He surprised the P.M. by telling him of the vast character of American undertakings. They are constructing a motor road from San Francisco to New York, 3,500 miles long, made of concrete with a surface of asphalt. There are one or two other roads of the same sort. Quite recently he motored at seventy miles an hour on one of them. He described the huge grain elevators, flour mills, steel works, iron and coal mines.

Evidently L. G. was much surprised at Geddes's statements. I don't think he really appreciates what modern America is. He said to Geddes, "You have come here in a nice pessimistic vein. From what you say, poor old Europe is out of the picture, and we may as well accept the position." But it was evident that he discounted Geddes, and did not believe that Europe was a back number. However, at about 10.30 he picked up his papers and marched off to bed, looking rather depressed.

Geddes described Harding, the new President, as a typical American provincial newspaper proprietor. He said that Harding is very thick with a Mrs. Maclean and her husband, proprietors of the *Washington Post*. They are millionaires and live in a palace in Washington—a beautiful place with a large park. Among other things the Macleans own the celebrated Hope diamond, which seems to have been functioning very actively since it has been in the Maclean family. Maclean senior, who bought the diamond, had a taste of its powers and has joined the vast majority. Mrs. Maclean's baby has been killed, also her brother, and she herself has been seriously



THE HOUSE-WARMING PARTY AT CHEQUERS WHEN IT WAS HANDED OVER TO 'THE NATION BY LORD LEE

(Left to right): Lady Greenwood, Mr. Lloyd George, Sir Hamar (now Lord) Greenwood, Mrs. (now Dame Margaret) Lloyd George, Sir Bertrand (now Lord) Dawson, Miss Megan Lloyd George, the late Lord Milner, Lord Reading, Sir Robert Horne, Mr. Davis (the American Ambassador) and his wife, and Lord Riddell

injured but, being a woman of courage and parts, declines to admit that an oriental diamond can influence the life of a free-born American woman. Geddes describes her as clever and good-looking.

Geddes is energetic, keen and intent on his job.

After the break-up of L. G.'s party, Geddes, Worthington-Evans and I went to Geddes's room and sat talking until 1.30 a.m.. Geddes suggested that the Prince of Wales should become Governor-General of Canada. He thinks that the appointment would be enormously popular and would cement the union. He also thinks it would create a splendid impression in the United States. Canada would become the social centre of the continent, and, by making a few visits to the States, the P. of W. would do more to alter American public opinion in favour of Great Britain than could be achieved by any other means.

PARIS : 27TH.—Kerr attended the Conference as arranged and made full notes. In the evening he and I prepared reports of the speeches made by L. G. and Briand—speeches of vital importance. The publication of these entirely altered the whole atmosphere of Paris and London. I drove back from the Conference with L. G., who said he thought it undesirable to publish quite all he had said, as the effect might be to bring about the downfall of the Briand Government. L. G. had said at the end of his speech that it was essential to come to a settlement ; that he was not prepared to fix the annuities for five years and leave the determination of Germany's full liability to a further conference as suggested by Briand. I said I thought it desirable that the French and British people should know that L. G. was insisting upon an immediate settlement and also on the Germans paying to the full extent of their powers.

L. G. : You must do as you like. I cannot control what you do.

In preparing our report, Kerr and I toned down L. G.'s observations somewhat, but their purport was evident.

On Thursday I entertained the British and American Press to dinner, but owing to the large amount of matter to be transmitted we did not sit down until 9.30. L. G. was coming,

but on account of the lateness of the hour dined in his room. He came after dinner—about 10.30—and remained for an hour. He skilfully answered a number of questions. The journalists were delighted and he left in a blaze of glory.

28TH.—Friday was a hectic day. The Conference did not sit. The whole time was occupied by private conversations between the committee appointed to report upon reparations etc., and L. G., Briand and other members of the Conference. At last a conclusion was arrived at. As Briand left I said to L. G., "He looks as if he had been under the weather, poor man!"

L. G. : Yes it has been touch and go with him.

Earlier in the day I spent some time with D'Abernon and Worthington-Evans—two members of the committee—in J. T. Davies's bedroom, adjoining L. G.'s sitting-room, which by the way was the American conference chamber of 1919—the place where Wilson hatched the Smuts and Phillimore egg containing the League of Nations. It was curious to see D'Abernon sitting on J. T. Davies's bed, discussing the German obligations in milliards of marks. The proceedings were most informal, L. G. walking from room to room and flitting about the passages. Worthington-Evans told me that the idea of a tax on German exports was his. It had first occurred to him in 1919 when he was at the Pensions Ministry. He had sent it to the Treasury, who had turned it down. He had subsequently shown it to Bonar Law, who thought there might be something in it. It was sent to Paris and disappeared. He revived it again two or three days ago by proposing it to Jaspar, one of the Belgian representatives,<sup>1</sup> but did not put the proposal forward as a British scheme or say that we intended to advocate it. He merely told him about it. Next day Jaspar was prepared to father it.

I got full details of the proposed settlement from Worthington-Evans and D'Abernon and communicated them to the Press. There was a general feeling of exhilaration at the settlement. L. G. asked me to dine with him, but I was unable to do so, as the British and American Press were entertaining

<sup>1</sup>Foreign Minister 1920-24.

me to dinner—a pleasant function at which kind and complimentary things were said concerning my work and especially what I had done for the Americans, who had no one to represent them.

Elmer Roberts, Head of the Associated Press of America, gave me a thoughtful account of the relations between Britain and America—a subject on which he is well informed. He regards future possibilities as serious. He outlined the history of American sea power and said it was a mistake to think that America had never been a maritime nation. The Americans were justly entitled to desire a powerful navy and mercantile marine. Their experiences in the war had emphasised their wishes in that direction. He thought that Harding would convene a conference on the subject of armaments and would propose some sort of coalition of nations. The French and English would justly respond, "We already have an organisation of that sort formed at the instance of America" and would suggest that America should become a member of the League of Nations. They would say, "If you don't like its form, make proposals for amending it." America would probably decline to join the League, with the result that friction might arise. He therefore thought it vital that the newspapers should be careful not to stir up bad feelings, and that every effort should be made to come to some arrangement which would obviate friction.

Count Sforza<sup>1</sup> told me he was not much of a speaker, having had no experience, but he said, "My success in the Chamber, such as it is, is due to that fact. They don't expect me to be able to speak, and consequently are surprised when I do fairly well. They are all orators, and when orators have to do with a Minister without experience in public speaking and who is supposed not to know how to speak, they never look for oratorical effects and are much relieved when he makes a successful business statement without oratorical graces."

Worthington-Evans is genial and hearty. He almost embraces the foreigners, and I am always expecting him to kiss them on both cheeks.

29TH.—I had tea with the delegates at the Quai d'Orsay.

<sup>1</sup> Italian Foreign Minister 1920-22.

After tea we went to the Salon d'Horloge, where the agreement was signed. Everyone looked much relieved, but the truth is that the whole thing is a bit of eye-wash to save Briand's face and to meet L. G.'s objection to making the German burden too heavy. Under the Paris agreement I reckon that the Germans during the next five years will pay much less than they would have paid under the Boulogne agreement, but Briand cannot face a fixed sum, and L. G. will not agree to the figure demanded by the French—hence the percentage arrangement. International agreements and international politics are strange things. Sometimes one thinks that the world is not run on realities but on fictions suitable for immediate consumption.

I said to L. G. "Where did you sit?"

He showed me the chair and said, "There are the notes I made while the Austrian discussion was going on," pointing to a horrible mess on blotting paper.

I said "A nebulous looking affair!"

He answered, "Well, isn't the Austrian situation nebulous?"

The brilliantly lighted room with the delegates dotted about, L. G. and Briand signing the agreement and the various secretaries hard at work completing their memoranda, was a striking sight.

L. G. called to Kerr and said, "Now I must give a dinner-party to-night. Whom shall we invite?" He then sat down and wrote out the list. A remarkable gathering—Briand, Loucheur,<sup>1</sup> Doumer,<sup>2</sup> Camerlynck, Auckland Geddes, Hankey, Lady Hankey, Miss Stevenson, Kerr, J. T. Davies, Count Sforza, D'Abernon, Worthington-Evans and myself.

Briand said some interesting things. He has a wonderful voice with a beautiful timbre. It never seems to vary. It never seems too high or too low. He has a strange mouth and a little pocket under his chin. When he speaks, his mouth which is hidden under his moustache, rather seems to work sideways, but that does not interfere with his voice or with the beauty of the things he says. He talked much of Lenin and Trotsky,

<sup>1</sup> Briand's Minister for the Liberated Regions; d. 1931.

<sup>2</sup> Briand's Finance Minister, and President in 1931; assassinated 1932.

whom he knew well when as a Socialist he used to attend Socialist conferences. He said, "They are doctrinaires—quite incapable of practical government." He told a remarkable story about Kitchener. During one of the conferences in the war they were walking on the sea-shore. Kitchener turned and said to him, "I hate the sea!" "Are you a bad sailor?" asked Briand. "I don't mean that," said Kitchener. "I hate the sight of it. I hate its angry roll!" A prophetic dislike, as Briand said.

Loucheur, who looks a queer person (as he probably is), was careful to impress upon me that he was a friend of Clemenceau, Millerand and Briand, and that he had been brought into the Government of each of them rather against his will. I should think he is very able—quick and alert. He must have wonderful hearing. I noticed that while he was talking to me he was listening to what everyone else was saying, and although the table was large and the conversation general he rarely missed a word. He continually threw interjections into the various conversations and then went on with our talk. He says that Briand never reads anything—that he gets all his information from his colleagues and by questions, but that he has a wonderful capacity for picking up points that matter, and a marvellous power of speech and persuasion. He knows just what to say to the Chamber of Deputies or to a popular audience and is the second best orator in France. Viviani is the first, but will not forsake the law for politics. He transcends every other speaker, but he is a perplexing person. In private conversation he is confused in what he says and often at a loss for a word, but directly he gets on his feet, he is immense. At Geneva, Loucheur drove with him to the meeting place. He talked in a most confused manner and was frequently at a loss for the right word. When he rose to speak he made one of the finest orations of modern times and absolutely swept the whole audience off their feet. "I cannot understand him," said Loucheur.

## Chapter XXXIII

*Mrs. L. G. as an electioneer—A blow to secret diplomacy—Germans, Turks and Greeks come to London—Dr. Simons's Blunder—Briand's early days as a journalist—An interesting party.*

FEBRUARY 15TH, 1921.—Important interview with Kerr and Sir William Tyrrell at the Foreign Office, regarding forthcoming conferences—on the 21st regarding Turkish questions, and on the 28th with the Germans. The publicity arrangements are to be on the same lines as at the Continental conferences, but Vansittart,<sup>1</sup> Curzon's secretary, is to be associated with Kerr, so that the F.O. will be kept in touch. We discussed the permanent relations of the F.O. with the Press. We all agreed that the existing arrangements were most unsatisfactory and that, as a result, British newspapers were being used by foreign Governments to advocate their views; while on the other hand, the British case was not being represented. Tyrrell said that before and during the war the F.O. arrangements had worked satisfactorily. For a long period he himself had provided the Press with information. Since the Peace there had been no proper channel of information except at the Conferences when Kerr had functioned. Tyrrell further said it was impossible for anyone to perform this task satisfactorily unless he was in the closest touch with the Foreign Secretary. It was essential that the person charged with this duty should have intimate knowledge of what was being done and of the Foreign Secretary's state of mind from day to day and hour to hour. The Private Secretary was the only person who had this information. I said it was most important that there should be a well-informed and recognised medium of communication. Tyrrell and Kerr agreed and the latter said it was essential that the new system should be set up immediately, so that it would be in working order when the F.O.

<sup>1</sup>Now Sir Robert Vansittart.



resumed full control of foreign affairs. Therefore it was agreed that Vansittart should work with Kerr and that the statements for the Press should be supplied by the two jointly.

19TH.—To Chequers. Long talk with L. G.. Much excited over the Cardigan election, in which Ernest Evans, his secretary, is opposing Llewelyn Williams.<sup>1</sup> The result expected every minute when I arrived. Mrs. L. G. has been working like a Trojan in the constituency, delivering fifty-eight speeches in a fortnight. While L. G. and I were walking in the park she came running out breathless, to tell him that Evans had won by a majority of 3,500. He was delighted and said that if the result had been the other way it would have been a serious personal set-back. He warmly embraced Mrs. L. G., bestowing several hearty kisses upon her and telling her that she had won the election.

Later on, he drafted a message of congratulation to Evans and took great delight in dictating it over the telephone. For some time he spoke of little else but the election. He said that Mrs. L. G. had displayed remarkable skill, and had said some very shrewd things, particularly on the drink question. She is no doubt very popular. Her simple, direct ways appeal to the people.

Hankey came in the evening. We had some amusing talk about President Wilson. L. G. and Hankey recalled that when Wilson brought forward the League of Nations he said that Jesus Christ had had the idea but had not put it into practical shape, whereas he, Wilson, was now prepared with a definite plan. "His plan," said L. G., "was borrowed from Smuts." He said, "I gave him Smuts's plan and begged him to consider it. He intimated that he did not want any assistance but, after reading Smuts's memorandum, swallowed it whole, and the League as propounded was really a British production, although fathered by President Wilson." I said, "Phillimore was part author with Smuts."

L. G. : Yes, I had forgotten him.

Some ladies came to dinner. In reply to a question by one of them, L. G. said he was afraid we had not seen the end of war. Human nature had not changed, and despite Leagues

<sup>1</sup>Recorder of Cardiff; Liberal M.P. Carmarthen, 1906-18; d. 1922.

of Nations and general aspirations for peace, wars would break out again in the course of time, although he hoped not.

L. G., Hankey and I were discussing Worthington-Evans. L. G. remarked, "Evans said to —, a foreigner, who is probably a Jew, and whom Evans evidently regarded as such, 'Scotland, my boy! Scotland's no place for your people! Even they cannot make a living there!' I could not stop him," added L. G..

We had a long talk about the forthcoming Conference with the Turks and Greeks. Hankey gave us an account of what he had picked up in Rome. He has been in Italy for a fortnight's holiday. He said the Italians were strongly pro-Turk.

L. G. : Well, that is not a bad thing. It is just as well there should be someone at the Conference whom the Turks regard as their friend.

R. : I hope we shall get some definite decisions, as the present state of uncertainty is a canker in the heart of Europe. Commerce and industry will not flourish until the question of German reparations and other outstanding questions have been settled.

L. G. and Hankey both strongly agreed.

Sunday was a lovely day. We had a long walk—L. G., Hankey, Megan and a friend of hers. We scrambled up and down hills and through woods, L. G. leading the way with great gusto and displaying extraordinary agility and vigour. He is much better than he was. A short time ago, after climbing a hill he was quite puffed. He called on the whole party to take breathing exercises. He said he ascribed his health to this, although he only followed the practice spasmodically when opportunity offered.

21ST TO 25TH.—A great week in one way. Kerr and I have really pulverised secrecy, and by hook or crook have succeeded in extracting and publishing all that happened at the Greco-Turkish Conference at St. James's Palace.

I also secured a victory in getting a fine room for the reporters in the Palace itself and tea also!

24TH.—L. G. very amusing and in great form notwithstanding all his worries. Labour, unemployment, Ireland,

etc.. We walked round the picture gallery in St. James's Palace looking at the pictures. L. G. much interested in George II and the Marquis of Granby. He said, pointing to George II, "There is the hero of a priceless story. When his wife was dying she said to him, 'George, if you would be happier, marry again. I should like to die knowing that you will be happy!' George, wiping away the tears from his eyes, said, 'No, my darling! I shall never marry again! I shall only keep a mistress!'"

The Marquis of Granby also gave L. G. much satisfaction. He said, "There is the man after whom many public houses are named. And he looks the part, I am glad to see. He looks as if he knew what good stuff was!"

Walked with L. G. and Kerr across the Park and lunched with the former alone. Very pleasant.

26TH.—Spent the day at Chequers with L. G.. Briand, Berthelot and others are coming this afternoon for the weekend.

L. G. has arranged for Briand and Foch to attend the St. David's Day dinner on Tuesday. When I arrived he was full of the arrangements, telephoning about the singers, etc.. He said that when he invited A. J. Balfour the music was very bad, and he, L. G., was ashamed and spent a miserable evening.

After lunch, L. G. slept for half an hour and then we went off to golf on the local links. L. G. in great form and full of energy. He spoke a good deal about the Lord Chief Justice-ship becoming vacant owing to Reading's appointment as Viceroy.

L. G. : As Attorney-General, Gordon Hewart is entitled to the position, but just now he cannot be spared from the House of Commons, where he is most effective. I told him so before Reading was appointed Viceroy.

R. : That is a hardship! Hewart is a most able man. He is so good in the House of Commons that he might become Prime Minister.

L. G. : He might (laughing). I wish he would! Everyone knows that he is an able man. His reputation is secure. I mean to stick to the arrangement. Some other suitable

man must be appointed. Hewart's turn is certain to come later.<sup>1</sup>

We talked of Kerr. L. G. said, "I shall be sorry to lose him, and don't quite know how to replace him. I think it would not be a bad plan to make him chairman of the *Daily Chronicle*. His judgment and knowledge would be useful there."

MARCH 1ST, 1921.—Meeting with the Germans at Lancaster House to discuss Reparations. The first time they had been admitted to the Supreme Council since Spa. I stood in the Gallery adjoining the Conference Room, the door of which was open, so I heard Dr. Simons's<sup>2</sup> speech and the translations. The speech was tactless and ill-advised, and made a very bad impression. When L. G. came out, he said to me, "What a people they are! They always do the wrong thing! Their proposals are absurd."<sup>3</sup> They have done their best to alienate the sympathies of those who were in favour of moderation. We are not going to be jack-booted by the Germans!"

Kerr gave me a detailed account of the speech, from which I prepared the statement issued to the Press.

4TH.—Turco-Greek Conference at St. James's Palace. They did not meet each other in the Conference Room, but we all had tea together, and there were no indications of any ill-feeling. The Greeks declined the proposal of the Conference to appoint a Commission. The Turks accepted it. I asked L. G. what was to happen next. He said, "We are going to let matters simmer for a bit, but I shall see the Turkish and Greek representatives informally."

He also told me that the Germans were much perturbed about yesterday's speech and were now quarrelling among

<sup>1</sup> Sir Gordon Hewart became Lord Chief Justice and was created Lord Hewart in 1922.

<sup>2</sup> The German Foreign Minister.

<sup>3</sup> They amounted to an offer to pay the Allies a gross total of £650 millions during the next five years. Of this sum £250 millions would be payable in annuities of £50 millions, supplied partly in goods and labour. The remaining £400 millions was to be the proceeds of a loan. After five years a new agreement would have to be negotiated. The Allies' claims, submitted to the Reparations Commission in February 1921, amounted to roughly £11,600 millions. In April the Commission announced that its assessment was £6,600 millions.

themselves and reproaching each other for having done foolish things. He said, "They want to see me, to ascertain what I think reasonable."

I said, "They should have adopted another line when they addressed the Conference. They should have expressed their willingness to agree to any figures the Allies might think fair and then have pointed out the difficulties of fulfilment and expressed their desire to confer as to the best method of achieving the object in view. Directly you come to details the difficulties arise. What the Germans have to do is to make the best possible arrangements for themselves for the next five years. After that date, they may trust to Providence."

I told the P.M. that I was much struck by the inadequacy of Dr. Simons to the occasion. It was difficult to believe he was speaking for a great people. He gave no sense of conviction and did not seem like a great national leader. He had the opportunity of making a great speech which would have impressed the world. This did not require much dexterity. He entirely lost his opportunity. The Germans may be a very clever people, but they do not display cleverness in their diplomacy.

L. G. : You are quite right. It was a lamentable exhibition.

I (R.) was talking of this to one of the delegates, who made the cynical remark that the Germans are too crude and truthful for a job of this sort, not because they want to be honest, but because they don't know how to be dishonest successfully. They want to slip out of their obligations, and their methods are so crude that they say so plainly.

10TH.—The Conference with the French was held in Bonar Law's room at the House of Commons. It began late as L. G. was speaking in the House. I arrived about 7.30 and found him storming up and down his room which is next to Bonar Law's, loudly complaining that he had been deserted and that no arrangements had been made for dining the Conference. He said, "Just think of it ! Here am I with all these responsibilities and no one to help me !" Then he went and gazed moodily out of the window. Meanwhile the Conference was going on in the next room. On going downstairs I found that arrangements had been made. I returned and L. G. asked me

to the dinner. I went to St. James's Palace, gave the Press an account of the proceedings and then returned to the House of Commons. The party consisted of Briand, L. G., Austen Chamberlain, Berthelot, Guest, Camerlynck, Hankey, Captain Evans and one or two others. Briand was in splendid form, and said, referring to my being late for dinner, "I was a journalist for fifteen years. When I started I knew nothing about it. I did not know how to get news. All the other journalists looked askance at me and gave me no assistance. Therefore, having a vivid imagination, I began to compile my own news. This upset them and led their editors to criticise them for overlooking important items. They came to me and said, 'Where did you get this?' Of course I did not enlighten them. But we made a concordat. They supplied me with the real news—usually dull, and I brightened up the total contribution by imaginative items which added to the gaiety of nations! What is the good of news if it is not interesting?" He also gave us an amusing account of a French political meeting. He said, "The first step is to elect the chairman. This usually leads to blows and a *mêlée*. After the chairman is elected everyone is so excited that the audience will not listen to the speakers. It takes some time for them to settle. Several speakers are shouted down and eventually the meeting becomes calm and listens to an ordinary speech. As a rule, if anyone wishes to criticise the party in control of the meeting, he is invited on to the platform. When he arrives he is asked to state his point. Directly he does so, he is knocked off the platform!" L. G. said this reminded him of Hughes's alleged method of appointing a prize-fighter as chairman. The prize-fighter began the proceedings by saying that everyone would be allowed to state his point of view, but indicated by his attitude that if anyone accepted the invitation, he might expect violence.

Briand gave an amusing account of voting in the French Chamber. The French Deputies can vote by ballot and leave their votes behind them in their respective boxes. In times of crisis votes are often stolen and used on the other side. Once Briand himself was turned out by ten votes. On the next day it transpired that a number of votes had been stolen and that he had not been turned out. They asked him to go back. He

declined, saying that being dead he now preferred to be buried.

The Conference resumed about 9.30, when Briand and L. G. had an interview with Hadad, the Emir Feisal's representative. It was interesting to see the Arab conferring with the representatives of Britain and France. He is a cultured, accomplished man, and seemed able to hold his own in discussion. The Conference ended at 10.30, when I made another address to the Press in the precincts of Westminster Hall.

Kerr is away ill. From what he said to me I think he is sad at the course things have taken. He has always fought for the revival of Germany, opening up trade with Russia and the supremacy of the Greeks over the Turks. Recent events have gone the other way.

12TH.—I have been engaged in revising the new regulations regarding the use of international cables for Press work. George Lansbury, the Labour leader, asked me to urge that English should be recognised as an international language as well as French. I think we may be able to arrange this.

18TH.—L. G. came to me to-day and said, "We have sent for Foch. You had better let the Press know. You can say that we have sent for him so that we can consult him about the enforcement of the Treaty—say the sanctions."

19TH.—To Chequers. L. G. and Mrs. L. G., Caradoc Rhys, an old friend of the P.M.'s. I stayed over Sunday. Lord Dawson came in the afternoon and remained until after dinner. L. G. busy most of the time, talking politics to Caradoc Rhys. The only other visitor was Mrs. Mary Davies, the singer—a highly intelligent old lady.

L. G. : Of course the present condition of affairs cannot be defended. A man who earns £5 a week by a week's continuous labour and who has a difficulty in making both ends meet, regards the millionaire who lives on the fat of the land and who, in some cases, does no work, as an injustice. How can you defend him ? How can you say that an attempt should not be made to improve the economic system ?

R. : I am not fond of millionaires, but the answer is that the world is not governed by logic or justice. Things are as they are.

L. G. : Yes, I remember that John Morley put it in his

usual clever way. I put the same question to him. He said, "For some inscrutable reason, a wise Providence has not framed the world on lines of justice and equality. Nature teems with inequalities and injustices. Why should man expect a different system in regard to the distribution of wealth?"

26TH.—To Lympne. To stay with Sassoon. The party: L. G., Lord French and others.

Horne arrived on the Monday and accepted the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. I thought he did not look very well. He gave evident signs of elation—not surprising perhaps. Few men have had such a rapid rise.

27TH (EASTER SUNDAY).—The Prince of Wales came down. An interesting party. *Dramatis Personæ*: the Prince of Wales; Sassoon, member of the Rothschild family; L. G., formerly village boy, solicitor, now Prime Minister; Lady Ribblesdale, wealthy American; Macdonald, member of the aristocracy; Gubbay, a nice man chiefly intent on commerce; Mrs. Gubbay, a clever Jewess with a definite philosophy of life; Evelyn FitzGerald, genial stockbroker and man of the world, secretary to Jack Cowans during the war; Miss Stevenson, one of L. G.'s secretaries; Horne, son of a Presbyterian minister; Dudley Ward, grandson of the late Lord Esher, with long descent, rowed in university boat; Mrs. Dudley Ward, daughter of a Nottingham lace manufacturer—a clever, perceptive sort of woman, always on the move, singing, dancing, smoking, talking or playing tennis.

A cinema show was provided for the evening. The Prince arrived in the afternoon and stayed until about 9 o'clock. He had motored from Windsor and had to motor back, roughly in all a 200-mile journey. He brought with him a very intelligent young officer named Llewellyn, who had been wounded in the war.

The P.M. went to Canterbury Cathedral with Lord French on Good Friday night. On Sunday he went to the Baptist chapel with Sassoon. Greatly to Sassoon's delight, the P.M. has made him a Trustee of the National Gallery. He is interested in artistic affairs, concerning which he is somewhat of an authority.



The P.M. spent much time sleeping or in his own room. Nothing very exciting took place in the way of conversation, but in discussing the use of Christian names, L. G. remarked, " I am not very active in that way. I don't believe in being too familiar with people."

## Chapter XXXIV

*L. G. talks of meeting Michael Collins—The danger of an Irish Republic—New men in the Government—France wants new reparation terms—Her eagerness to occupy the Ruhr.*

APRIL 2ND, 1921.—Motored to Chequers, arriving at 11 p.m. L. G. asked me to go earlier, but I could not as I was dining with Leverhulme. House in darkness when I arrived.

3RD (SUNDAY).—Eric Geddes came early to talk to L. G. about the strike<sup>1</sup> and his forthcoming Railway Bill.

Sassoon arrived, evidently disappointed that his name is not in the new list of Government appointments. In fact, he said as much. He is keen to do some useful work. He left early. Burnham arrived. He, L. G. and I went for a walk and subsequently had tea together. Much talk of the coal strike and labour situation.

I congratulated Burnham on the new scales of pay he had arranged for the school teachers.<sup>2</sup> He told us they were much happier now, and that increased remuneration had done much to soften their feelings. He strongly criticised the economy campaign in regard to education.

L. G. agreed with this and paid Burnham compliments.

Much talk of Ireland.

L. G. : The question is whether I can see Michael Collins.<sup>3</sup> No doubt he is the head and front of the movement. If I could see him, a settlement might be possible. The question is whether the British people would be willing for us to negotiate with the head of a band of murderers.

R. : It is a pretty strong order for the Prime Minister of

<sup>1</sup>The miners went on strike on March 31st in support of their demands for a National Wages Board and a Pool system under which prosperous mines would assist non-profitable mines.

<sup>2</sup>Lord Burnham was chairman of the standing Joint Committees of Education Authorities and Teachers.

<sup>3</sup>Assassinated 1922.

the British Empire to have such an interview. But it might be done by a third party.

L. G. : I don't think that would do. I had him seen, but nothing effective happened. I must see him myself. It is a strong order to see a man who has given orders to shoot down innocent, unoffending policemen.

Burnham and I both agreed that it would be difficult for the P.M. to see Collins, particularly as it would be necessary to give him a safe conduct.

L. G. : It is curious that we have received messages from the Nationalists telling us to go on—that we shall get the revolutionaries under before long, and that the only hope for Ireland is for this to be done. The Nationalists say they dare not stand for the new Irish Parliament or they would be shot, and that there is a reign of terror in Ireland which is being carried on by a comparatively small number of desperate men. The other day I was talking to Sir Henry Robinson,<sup>1</sup> the oldest Irish civil servant. I said to him, "Have you ever seen Ireland in as bad a state before?" He said, "Oh, yes! In a worse state!" This may or may not be true, but obviously there have been previous periods when things have been pretty much as they are now. Reverting to the proposal that I should see Collins, it would be rather like the Prime Minister of the day seeing Kelly, who was engaged in the Phoenix Park murders.

BURNHAM : Do you really think you are getting these people under?

L. G. : It is difficult to say. Shrewd observers say it will take twelve months. The question is whether the people of this country are prepared to go on for twelve months.

R. : We are faced with a serious problem. The same sort of problem as caused the American Civil War. The question is whether the British Empire is to be broken up.

L. G. : I quite agree with that. The gravity and importance of the situation are not sufficiently understood. I see no alternative but to fight it out. The analogy between the Irish situation and the American Civil War is complete. It must be remembered that the North fought the South for four years,

<sup>1</sup> d. 1927.

and lost hundreds of thousands of lives in the process. At that time there were differences of opinion in the North as to the wisdom of what was being done. To-day everyone agrees that the right decision was arrived at. I believe that history will say the same of Ireland if we fight it out. A republic at our doors is unthinkable.

R. : It would not be a republic of a combined nation. The republic would represent only two-thirds of the Irish population.

We had some interesting talk about Disraeli, Gladstone, etc.. L. G. said, "If I were advising a young man, I should advise him to study John Bright for platform work, Gladstone for Parliamentary debating, and Disraeli for amusement. No man but a genius could speak like Burke and Disraeli. Everyone would laugh at him, but in a small way everyone could copy Bright or Gladstone."

Burnham told an amusing story of Gladstone's regard for rank. At some private dinner, he insisted on following the son of a baron, that being the right order of precedence.

L. G. : The old man was rather snobbish in these matters—a mixture of snobbery and old-fashioned courtesy.

In the morning I had rather an interesting talk with L. G. regarding the new members of the Government.

L. G. : Hilton Young is perhaps the most interesting of the new men. He has had a wonderful career. Before the war, he was financial editor of the *Morning Post*. Fisher told me a good story about him. After he had lost his arm at Zeebrugge, he turned up at the Admiralty one day and volunteered for Archangel. He was told they did not want one-armed men there. He replied, "If you will come with me to Trafalgar Square, I will show you a little one-armed man who did something for his country." His appeal was not in vain. He got the job. Whether he will be a success at the Treasury one cannot say. He may be too theoretical. At the same time one must have intellectual men in the Government. In the old days, John Morley was very useful from that point of view. He used to sit quietly and listen. Then he would come out with something fresh and original, brought up from the depths of his knowledge and intuition—something quite different from our

contributions to the discussion. It is valuable to watch that side of public life. I think both Hilton Young and young Wood<sup>1</sup> will be valuable from that point of view. They have intellect. I don't say that intellectual men are always capable administrators. Very often they are not, but they have their place in nature.

In the evening, long quiet chat with L. G..

L. G. : I should not mind going out now, provided I did not go out discredited. I would not mind going out on some question on which I feel strongly. A question of this sort is about to arise on the Railway Bill. I gave Geddes final instructions to-day. The Bill will contain a provision giving the men representation on the Boards of management. That is likely to cause serious controversy, but I think it is the right thing and I mean to stand by it. Geddes is all for it. He says it must be done. I don't see how you can do anything else.

5TH.—Lunched with Hartshorn, who gave me an account of the points in the miners' dispute. He put a very different face on the withdrawal of the safety-men from the pumps. He explained that the masters had given the safety-men notice and posted notices on the pits stating that any man who went on working did so on the new terms. Of course the men would not do this pending a settlement.

I drove to Downing Street and dictated a memorandum to Sylvester, the new secretary, defining the points in difference, and repeating what Hartshorn had said. I saw the P.M. and explained the matter to him. He told Sylvester to send the memorandum to him at the House of Commons. L. G. was much surprised to learn that the movement is not one of extremists, but that the men at the back of it are old-fashioned miners like Hartshorn, Stephen Walsh, Tom Richards, etc.. The P.M. said, "We will do anything that can be done, except resume control and subsidise the mines."

17TH (SUNDAY).—To Chequers. Mrs. L. G., Megan and Miss Cazalet. L. G. in great form, joking and laughing. On Sunday evening he gave an amusing imitation of Megan's singing and then proceeded to give her lessons as to how she should open her mouth, etc.. On Monday morning at

<sup>1</sup>Now Lord Irwin.

breakfast, he had a big batch of Parliamentary papers with his draft answers. Two or three of these he had drafted in his own handwriting before coming downstairs. He gave an amusing imitation of the way in which the various questions would be put to him, imitating the different members in whose names they stood, and indicating the manner in which he would reply. A real bit of comedy.

22ND (FRIDAY NIGHT).—To Lympne, arriving at 9.30. Much talk about the miners' dispute.

I said the Board of Trade and Coal Control Department had badly bungled matters. Their information had been wrong. They had thought that the miners were bluffing. Consequently they had let the nation slip over the precipice. The dispute should have been settled before decontrol.

L. G. agreed. He said he did not know the dispute was serious until it was too late to take action. Hartshorn had dinner with him on the previous evening. He said the miners were angry with Horne.

A long talk about the Conference to-morrow.

L. G. : I have received a protest against the proposed occupation of the Ruhr, signed by Asquith, Lord Robert Cecil and Barnes, and there is a strong feeling in the provincial Press. The French are anxious to enter the Ruhr at all costs, I am afraid. I support the Paris terms. The Germans will have to carry them out. The French are now talking of tearing them up and making fresh demands. I cannot agree to that.

L. G. then sent for the German Note regarding French reparations, just received. He said, "You might let the Press know about this. In fact there is no reason why you should not let them have a copy if you like."

After reading the document through, to see that it contained nothing that should not be disclosed, he gave it to me, and I telephoned the contents to London—three-quarters of a column.

LYMPNE : 23RD.—We started to play golf, but the weather became so bad that we had to return, being wet through.

Lord Derby telephoned to say he was arriving after lunch. We had already sat down when he came. After lunch he had a long talk with L. G. privately—both very mysterious. L. G.

said he wondered what D. wanted to see him about. Of course he knew very well that Derby was going to tell him what had happened in connection with D.'s visit to Ireland.

After lunch Briand arrived, and the Conference at once began. L. G. told me that Briand had brought no plan. He said, "Would you believe it? He has got no document showing what he proposes to do. He has not even got the military plans. He says they will be ready in two or three days' time. He is a parliamentarian!"

24TH (SUNDAY).—After the morning Conference on Sunday I walked up and down the terrace with L. G. and Kerr.

L. G. : The French are most unbusinesslike. They have got no plans. I had to ask Berthelot to draw up a document setting forth what they wished to do, and I had to supplement this by a scheme prepared by our own people who were working at it until twelve last night.

I told L. G. that I was not at all sure that the French were unbusinesslike. I thought it was their plan of action to be indefinite. They want to get into the Ruhr. They don't want to be tied up by conditions. Probably definition does not suit their purpose. L. G. had said the French talked nothing but platitudes. I remarked that platitudes might best serve their purpose at the moment.

In the event nothing definite was settled. Everything stands over for the Supreme Council on Saturday. In the afternoon I sat in the room next to that in which the Conference was taking place, listening to the rumbling of the voices of L. G. and Briand as they made their respective speeches, and to the interpreter reproducing them. So far as I can discover, on these occasions neither party says what he means. Each is trying to checkmate the other without appearing to do so. The French want the left bank of the Rhine and to occupy the Ruhr. L. G. wants reparations if he can get them, but does not want to smash Germany. The Germans are a silly people. A message came saying that they had sent another Note to the Allies through President Harding.<sup>1</sup> No copies had been supplied to the French or the British. This caused great annoyance.

<sup>1</sup> In this Note the Germans increased their original offer, with a stipulation that they must be allowed to retain Upper Silesia.

I arranged for an interview between L. G. and the British and American journalists on Sunday evening. It took place in an unusual environment. He received them in the drawing-room, which is beautifully decorated in oriental style!

The entertainment provided by Sassoon for his guests was magnificent—French cooking of the highest order, and plenty of it. A breakfast of several courses, succeeded by a lunch with more courses, then a gorgeous tea and in the evening a wonderful dinner.

At dinner Briand was most amusing. I asked him whether he enjoyed being Prime Minister more the first time or the last. He said, "The first! I am *blasé* now. And then, look at the state of affairs!"

I said, "But you are a philosopher. It does not trouble you!"

He shrugged his shoulders and replied, "Not so much of a philosopher as I seem, I can assure you!"

The conversation turned upon open-air speaking. L. G. said he had never practised this. It was a special art. Briand said he had spoken a lot in the open air. On more than one occasion he had addressed 50,000 people. I asked him whether oratory made him nervous. He said, "It is easier to address 50,000 citizens than 200 trained men."

We talked about Landru, the murderer. Briand said the public were beginning to wonder whether he existed or not, or whether he was not a dummy put up by the Government to divert public attention. He gave an amusing account of some of Landru's answers. When the examining magistrate drew his attention to his relations with one of his alleged victims and asked him how he accounted for her disappearance, he responded by saying, "Mr. Magistrate, who was your first love? If I say to you, 'What were your relations with her? And can you produce her?' would it be reasonable, if you could not do so, to charge you with having murdered her?"

L. G. said, "I often ask myself, 'What would you do if you found yourself in New York, unknown, without money and without friends?' What would you do?" (turning to Briand).

BRIAND: I should become a journalist, or I should starve.



Berthelot, to whom L. G. next addressed the question, made a good answer. He said he would establish a new religion. The Americans were always ready to take up anything new in that line.

Wigram, one of the F.O. clerks, made the best reply. He said, "I should get a job as a steward on a liner, and return to England as soon as possible!"

I said I should go on the stump in one of the parks, make a speech blackguarding the English, and then make a collection.

L. G. : Better still ! Go to the Irish quarter !

L. G. said that Winston is disgruntled. He thinks he should have had the Chancellorship. I hear that Kerr is going to the *Daily Chronicle*. L. G. discussed this project with me some time ago. I mentioned the matter to Kerr, who did not deny that I was right. He is to be succeeded by Sir Edward Grigg, who has been secretary to the Prince of Wales and was formerly on *The Times*. I said to Kerr that the old order was changing and would never be revived. L. G.'s relations with his staff were tending to become more formal. I have had a pleasant, useful association with Kerr. He is a clever, honourable, high-minded man, although rather fantastic in some of his ideas. He has the highest opinion of L. G.'s ability, and regards him as a sort of superman, but remarked that he is becoming a real autocrat.

To sum up this Conference, I think the French are very cunning and far more so than they get credit for.

## Chapter XXXV

*An ultimatum to the Germans—L. G. wants the Americans to come back—His prophecy of the Passchendaele disaster—Why Nivelle's offensive failed—The miners' dispute—The Crown Prince of Japan arrives—Bonar Law in retirement.*

MAY 5TH, 1921.—A busy week. The Conference started on Saturday and continued day by day until to-day, on several occasions sitting until late. On the last day we finished at midnight.

It was interesting to watch the by-play of the various interests. Sir Alfred Mond was one of the strongest advocates for enforcing strict terms against the Germans. Winston took the opposite line. Mond said to me, "I know the Germans. There is only one way to deal with them. You must be firm. I have no patience with Winston and the others who are anxious to treat them lightly," etc..

At the last moment it was discovered that in order to act within the Treaty, the Conference would have to get the Reparations Commission to adopt the terms agreed upon. A telephone message was sent in the afternoon to Paris asking the Commission to come over that night. They were very sticky, and not at all inclined to obey the direction, although it was sent on the authority of two Prime Ministers. L. G. was angry, and while the telephone conversation was proceeding, walked about the room talking of Jacks-in-Office and people dressed in a little brief authority. Not knowing French, I could not quite understand what Briand said, but gathered he was somewhat of the same opinion. However, eventually the Commission thought better of it and arrived in due course. After prolonged negotiation the terms were settled and approved. The ultimatum<sup>1</sup> was handed by L. G. to Herr Sthamer,

<sup>1</sup> This ultimatum was based on the Reparations Commission assessment of £6,600 millions. The Allies required Germany to pay £100 millions annually, plus 26 per cent. of her exports. Three series of bonds were to be issued,

the German Ambassador, on the following morning, and the terms were delivered by the Reparations Commission to the Germans in Paris on the following evening.

The terms appeared complicated, and it was with much difficulty that I made the reporters understand them.

D'Abernon is evidently strongly in favour of a settlement with Germany. He has an acute mind and was extremely helpful in giving information, but his views were apparent. He is anxious that the terms should not be too drastic, and also to show the Germans that the terms are not unfavourable.

It was obvious from what I heard that the French are bent on occupying the Ruhr if they can, by hook or by crook. They hate the Germans ; they have no faith in them, and believe that at the first opportunity they will seek revenge.

L. G. was anxious to get the Americans back into the Conference. He said, " That would help me to manage the French. At present my position is very difficult. The French want to take a course which in my opinion would cause another conflagration. It is difficult for me, single-handed, to withstand them. The Americans would be valuable allies."

14TH.—To Chequers. L. G., Mrs. L. G., Megan, Horne and Dr. and Mrs. Macnamara. The Crown Prince of Japan expected to-morrow to lunch.

L. G. in great spirits. At dinner we spoke about the war. I said that the military excuse for Passchendaele was the necessity for creating a diversion owing to the mutiny in the French Army.

L. G. : That was an afterthought. Pétain, who was in command of the French forces, was against Passchendaele. He prophesied disaster. He said, " You have two enemies—the Boche and the Boue (mud). You may defeat the Boche but the Boue will defeat you ! " And it did. Haig was very bent on the operation. From the first I thought it would be disastrous. I called a meeting of the War Council and stated my views, which I embodied in a memorandum. I said that the matter was one for the soldiers, and that it was not for a civilian to

and a Committee of Guarantees was to be set up to supervise the machinery for payment. Occupation of the Ruhr and other penalties were laid down in the event of default.

interfere, but that I wished to place my views on record. Anyway, the memorandum speaks for itself.

I got unified command under Nivelle,<sup>1</sup> but always believed that the French generals thought he would be a failure. He was a Protestant and they were mostly Catholics. Nivelle's plans were captured on the person of an officer, the Germans thus getting full and early notice of what was intended. It must be remembered that a court-martial was held on Nivelle. Two of the members were Foch and Gouraud. They practically found in his favour. As to Foch, in 1916 he had a very bad motor smash which put the old boy out of action for some time. Therefore, I doubt whether he would have been able to take command had this been possible.

We talked of the Irish question. L. G. said he thought from information he had received that Sinn Fein was being got under. The information came from good sources. There had been a proposal for a truce, but he was against it.

Everyone present spoke in high terms of Hamar Greenwood's courage. He, too, is against a truce. Horne remarked that he would not have Greenwood's job for money or distinction.

5TH (SUNDAY).—Had a long talk with Horne. He expressed surprise that the miners were so unfriendly to him. I told him they were under the impression that he was strongly in favour of the masters. Horne again said that he had been brought up with colliers, that his father, a Scottish minister in a mining village, had always championed their claims, and that his brother had worked in a coal mine as an ordinary collier to qualify himself for the position of colliery manager. Hodges and other miners' leaders are expected here to-morrow. L. G. told me that he is anxious to make a settlement that will satisfy the men and thus avoid further disputes.

The Crown Prince of Japan arrived with his suite. He has a habit of looking down, like an Eastern god, which he is in a way. The head is small, with a remarkable development above the eyes, showing, I believe, great powers of observation. He was pleasant and unassuming—in fact no one could

<sup>1</sup>Who succeeded Joffre in March 1916, but was replaced by Pétain after his disastrous offensive of April 16th between Soissons and Auberive. He died in 1924.

have been more courteous and appreciative. I had quite a long talk with him through Viscount Chinda. He asked me the position of the coal strike, and what it really meant. I said I thought a settlement was in sight, and that the men's claims were partially economic and partially idealistic, whereupon he enquired, very acutely, "Is the ideal nationalisation?" I said, "Tending in that direction," and asked him about the labour position in Japan, to which he answered, "Much the same as here—the same aspirations, but not so highly developed." I complimented him on his acquaintance with European affairs and said Mirabeau remarked that men were judged by what they had in the little space between their eyes, and that I noted with respect that His Imperial Highness was well equipped in that way. He seemed pleased with the compliment, and remarked that he knew about Mirabeau, who was a great orator.

Afterwards the party went for a walk to the top of the hill, which overlooks a wide vista. Pointing to some of the villages below, the Prince asked, "I suppose those are the villages that Gray speaks of?" I thought at first he meant Sir Edward Grey,<sup>1</sup> but soon found that he was referring to Gray's *Elegy*, so I told him he was correct, and that lying in the churchyard which he could see were "rude forefathers" similar to those mentioned by the poet, who wrote his *Elegy* in a churchyard not far distant. That seemed to interest him.

The next morning a message came from Hodges and Co. to say they were not coming.

12TH (SUNDAY).—To Chequers. Did not arrive till 8.30. Bonar Law, Horne, Dr. and Mrs. Macnamara, Mrs. L. G., Megan, Richard L. G. and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. McCurdy,<sup>2</sup> Sir Edward Grigg and Sylvester.

Much talk about the types of oratory suited to different audiences. L. G. said once more that Gladstone was the best speaker he had ever heard, but referred in glowing terms to some of the speeches of Bright and Disraeli. Horne was strong on Disraeli, from whom he gave one or two quotations. He

<sup>1</sup> Later Viscount Grey of Fallodon; d. 1933.

<sup>2</sup> The Rt. Hon. C. A. McCurdy, K.C., Food Controller, 1920–21; Coalition-Lib. Chief Whip, 1921–22.

also quoted Pericles' funeral oration, which sounded rather old-fashioned in such surroundings.

L. G. had been busy with Grigg, preparing his opening speech for the Imperial Conference. After dinner, the shorthand note was brought. He at once went through and corrected it while the party were busy conversing.

Bonar Law says he is better but not well. He looks as if he had had a bad shock. He told me that his Glasgow Rectorial Address had finished him off. He had never been in the habit of writing out his speeches. Someone suggested that, as he had not been well and in view of the importance of the occasion, he should dictate his Rectorial Address beforehand and take it with him for reference should his memory fail. With some hesitation he acted on the suggestion and placed the speech, I think he said, in the tail pocket of his coat. There were curious psychological repercussions. When he began to speak, instead of his mind concentrating on what he was about to say, it kept on turning to the manuscript in his pocket, with the result that he broke down. He pulled himself together, but was much upset at this mishap. He has been doing nothing but play bridge, chess, etc., but now proposes to play a little golf. He is returning to France for three months. He said he is quite happy to be out of politics and has no regrets.

L. G. said that he envied him and gave a graphic account of the cares of office.

B. L. : But you would not be happy if you were out of it.

L. G. : Yes, I should, but I should not be idle. I should write a book or something of that sort.

B. L. : Yes, and after a short time return, just for the sake of telling your successors how they ought to be doing it.

L. G. (laughing) : Yes, that would be most amusing.

B. L. : I don't say that I should not like to go down to the House of Commons and make an occasional speech, but it is a relief to feel that one has not got to be there.

Afterwards he told me, when we were alone, that while leading the House of Commons he never went there without a feeling of apprehension. Although he had much practice, he never felt secure that he would be able to perform the task to his satisfaction.

I had a long talk with L. G., Hankey and Grigg concerning the publicity for the Imperial Conference. I strongly urged that the proceedings should be as open as possible. The newspapers had passed a resolution to this effect and had suggested that I should act in the same capacity as at the Peace Conferences. In addition to the P.M., the resolution had been forwarded to the representatives of the Dominions and India. Hankey said a decision would be arrived at by the Conference to-morrow morning, but the proposal of the Home Government was to have the speeches taken in shorthand and to issue the full notes to the Press. It would, however, be necessary that certain of the meetings should be regarded as strictly private in view of the questions to be discussed.

(The shorthand notes were issued as proposed. This may be regarded as another victory for publicity.)

Hankey remarked, "You are gradually teaching us, and I hope we are profiting by the instruction."

14TH.—Lunched with Mr. B. Lenox Simpson,<sup>1</sup> political adviser to the Chinese Government, over here about the Japanese Treaty. He gave me some remarkable information regarding China, which obviously offers enormous trade possibilities. It will be interesting to know in future years whether we took the right course in reference to the renewal of the Japanese Treaty. Simpson says that the Chinese hate the Japanese and that unless we are careful we shall lose the friendship of China.

16TH.—Lunched with Hughes at Australia House. Just the same as ever—attractive, witty and amusing. Full of spirits. Burnham, Gwynne<sup>2</sup> and other newspaper people there.

Burnham and I strongly urged the necessity for improved communications within the Empire. Hughes expressed agreement and said that a system was required which would enable him to speak from his room in Australia to L. G. in Downing Street.

I thought, but did not say so, that we should have to breed a new race of Prime Ministers. A P.M.'s life is arduous enough as it is. What it will be when he is rung up by

<sup>1</sup> d. 1930.

<sup>2</sup> H. A. Gwynne, editor of the *Morning Post*.

Dominion Prime Ministers every five minutes, heaven alone knows !

22ND.—Saw L. G. for a few minutes at Downing Street. Told him of the proposal made to me by Murphy of the *Irish Times* that the Colonial Premiers should offer to meet De Valera.

L. G. : They would not be willing to do so, as they don't mean to incur the odium of pulling our chestnuts out of the fire.

He asked what I thought of Birkenhead's speech in the House of Lords. I said it was clever but not convincing.

L. G. : He is much better for his rest, but I think he wants a good long holiday.

23RD.—Evan Williams, President of the Coal Owners' Association, and Hartshorn came to lunch. Had a long talk extending over two hours. Friendly, but Hartshorn evidently bitter at the failure of the strike. Evan Williams spoke in a fair way. They both agreed that unless masters and men are prepared to co-operate to re-establish the industry, the results are likely to be serious.

24TH.—Met Stamfordham,<sup>1</sup> who told me he was seeing L. G. about Ireland. He said, " Now is the time to endeavour to bring about a reconciliation. Unless something is done, the effect of the King's speech will die away. There is not a moment to be lost. He (L. G.) must do something at once."

(On the next day L. G. wrote a letter to Craig, Prime Minister of the Northern Parliament, and to De Valera inviting them to a conference. Whether this was due to Stamfordham's representations, I don't know.)

I hear on good authority that there was a movement on foot to get L. G. to resign on the ground of health and to appoint Winston or Birkenhead in his place, but that the scheme broke down when it appeared that L. G. was not in the mood for resignation. It is said that Birkenhead has written a letter to L. G. disclaiming any part in the transaction.

<sup>1</sup>Lord Stamfordham, the King's Private Secretary; d. 1931.



## Chapter XXXVI

*The Overseas Premiers at Chequers—President Harding convenes a Disarmament Conference—The U.S. Ambassador on Prohibition—L. G.'s strained relations with the French.*

SUNDAY, JULY 3RD, 1921.—Spent Sunday night at Chequers, arriving just before dinner. Mr. and Mrs. L. G., Megan, Eric Geddes, Sir Frederick and Lady Sykes, the Greenwoods and Miss Rees, a Welsh singer.

L. G. looked tired and said he found the heat most oppressive. On Monday morning, however, he was spry as usual, but I am sure he wants a holiday. Dawson, whom I met in the House of Lords, says L. G. wants a long rest and that he has advised him to go to Scotland.

Nothing special happened. Most of the evening occupied with music. Eric Geddes in great form. He told me that he is looking forward to being released from the cares of office. He goes on August 15th, having had a wonderful career during the past six years. He is an able man with marvellous energy and big ideas, also genial and kind-hearted—a lovable sort of giant.

9TH.—To Chequers with Hankey. A big party in connection with the Imperial Conference. The Overseas Premiers were there with their wives. Also the Maharao of Kutch and Mr. Sastri,<sup>1</sup> the two Indian representatives at the Conference.

At dinner Hughes was in great form and told several good stories. Meighen,<sup>2</sup> the Canadian Premier, has considerable ability and is well-read, but lacks experience. His rise has been rapid. Only a few years ago he was a lawyer practising in a small town.

I had an interesting conversation with the Overseas Premiers and Indian representatives on the subject of

<sup>1</sup>The Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council, 1916-20.

<sup>2</sup>The Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen, K.C., Canadian Prime Minister, 1920-21.

newspapers. They made numerous enquiries as to the circulations and views of the various British papers. Hughes said he never read abusive or critical articles. If, on starting an article, he found it to be of that class, he did not finish it. "What is the good of annoying oneself by reading critical or abusive matter?" Massey<sup>1</sup> said he read whatever came in his way but did not mind what the papers said about him. Meighen said he read only one paper in the morning and another before going to sleep at night. The others did not trouble him. Hughes said, while not discounting the influence of the Press, he did not believe the newspapers could stop or influence any movement due to the desires of a large section of the community. The Labour Party in Australia had triumphed and prospered despite the Press. Both the Indians are intelligent, cultivated and well-informed. Sastri is a wonderful speaker. I asked him how he came to speak so well in English. He said his forefathers had been pundits from time immemorial, and that before he met an Englishman he had read a great deal of English literature.

After dinner, the P.M. had a big cinema show, the chief feature being the Duke of Connaught's tour in India.

Grigg is doing well as one of L. G.'s secretaries. He is a good draftsman and a nice fellow.

CHEQUERS : 10TH (SUNDAY).—A broiling hot day, but L. G. very active. He jocularly introduced me to Hughes as "A newspaper proprietor—one of our Governors—with a circulation of 3,500,000." Thereupon Hughes went on his knees and put his hands together in an attitude of supplication, saying, "That is the least I can do."

L. G., reading from his Foreign Office despatches, said news had come that Lenin had imprisoned Trotsky.

L. G. : I always thought he would come out on top. He and Trotsky have been at enmity for some time past. Lenin is the cleverer man of the two.

My wife and I went to lunch with the Burnhams at Hall Barn, where there was a large party, including Campbell Stuart and the American Ambassador, George Harvey, the

<sup>1</sup>The Rt. Hon. W. F. Massey, Prime Minister of New Zealand, 1912-25; d. 1925.

newspaper man,<sup>1</sup> who took a leading part in making Harding President. He is tall, clean-shaven and gaunt looking, with big horn-rimmed spectacles, and a jerky but attractive way of speaking. He is something of a wit. Years ago I used to play golf with him at Walton Heath. He was very pleasant and reminded me that in our matches, on balance, he had won money from me. I said I was glad, as no doubt his winnings had enabled him to become an Ambassador.

L. G. telephoned to say he would come over to Hall Barn to see the Ambassador, but the latter said he would prefer to go to Chequers. He told my wife that a momentous public announcement would be made to-day or to-morrow regarding the suggested Conference between Great Britain, America, Japan and China concerning Eastern affairs and disarmament. We left Burnham's at about 4 o'clock. The Ambassador sent a message by me to L. G. saying that he would start for Chequers immediately his despatches arrived. When I got to Chequers I found the party having tea under the trees.

The Ambassador arrived with his wife at about 7 o'clock. L. G. at once went off with him for a private confab.. They both returned looking very elated. Dinner was served on the lawn with Chinese lanterns spread about among the trees. Before dinner L. G. took me aside to explain that President Harding was about to convene a Conference on the limitation of armaments and that the announcement was to be sent out to-night by the American Government. He said the idea had originated in the Imperial Conference, and that on behalf of the Conference he had addressed letters to the United States, Japan and China asking for their views. It was important that, while President Harding should not be robbed of the honour of acting with promptitude, the public both here and in America should appreciate the part which had been played by the British Empire. It was arranged that I should communicate with the newspapers. Grigg drew up a short memorandum which I issued through the Press Association. Subsequently I rang up the London morning newspapers to explain the position and warn them that they might expect to receive the American Government's announcement later

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Ambassador 1921-24; d. 1928.

on. Grigg was particular that his memorandum should be issued exactly as he had written it. I rather demurred and suggested a less formal communication. However, I had to comply with his wishes, which was unfortunate, as the Press did not state the facts as well as they might have done had a different method been adopted. I was busy telephoning until nearly 11.30 p.m.. Meanwhile Grigg and Hankey were busy preparing the P.M.'s statement for the House of Commons on the following day.

Altogether an interesting and historic day.

This is one of the best things L. G. has done. There is no doubt that Harding's action is due to his initiative. As President and representative of Great Britain, L. G. is leader of the Imperial Conference—a position he occupies with much success. He was in his element to-day, moving about the lawn conferring first with one Overseas Minister, then with another, and then with the American Ambassador. As he and Harvey walked up and down the lawn, I wondered what influence their discussions would have on the fate of the world.

I had an interesting talk with the Ambassador on prohibition. He said he had strongly opposed it, but had come to the conclusion that it was a wise measure. His friends who had acted with him were now of the same opinion. He and they thought that the result would be to increase American efficiency by thirty per cent., and were satisfied that, while there might be temporary difficulties and inequalities, the generation now growing up would not wish to consume alcoholic beverages. I said that efficiency in the production of commodities might not prove to be the ultimate aim of human existence, and that a nation of teetotallers might prove to be critical.

The Ambassador laughed and said I might be quite right. Mr. Sastri, the only other person present, remarked that he understood the Indian drinking customs were not as bad as those of Great Britain, which he was told were very bad indeed. I said he was wrong, and that drinking and drunkenness had much decreased during the past fifty years. This seemed to cause him great surprise.

13TH.—I lunched with Northcliffe. Later he rang me up and asked me to inform the P.M. that he, Northcliffe, strongly

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disapproved of certain articles which had appeared in some of the newspapers under his control. He said he was going abroad and would probably be away for twelve months. N. said he had no feeling against the P.M.. He is going away for his health. He is to visit America, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and India. He said he was a sick man and disheartened. He seemed rather low and remarked jocularly that I might never see him again. He referred to the P.M.'s attack on him in the early part of 1919, when the P.M. suggested that there was nothing the matter with him, whereas he, N., was about to undergo a serious operation which might have ended his life. I said I was sure the P.M. had been misled. A rather sad talk, which made me miserable. I wonder whether he will get better.<sup>1</sup> Later I telephoned the purport of the conversation to L. G..

ONE DAY IN WEEK COMMENCING JULY 18TH.—Met L. G. at Downing Street. We spoke about the Washington Conference. He said, "Of course you will go for the papers." I replied, "Yes." He then went on to say that the Imperial Conference had had a meeting that morning, and that he, Smuts, Hughes and Massey did not intend to allow the British Empire to take a back seat. Great Britain had won the war. She had made enormous sacrifices in men and money, and they were quite determined that she should not be overshadowed by America. "At the next Conference with the French," said L. G., "I mean to say that it was a pity we did not come into the war in the fourth year instead of the first. Then we should have been properly appreciated. I don't mean to see the old country put into the background," he added with much emphasis, "and Hughes, Massey and Smuts quite agree with me."

28TH.—L. G. said he is not going to the Supreme Council meeting.

L. G. : In the minds of the French these meetings have developed into a sort of Dempsey-Carpentier engagements. I am always supposed to be getting the better or trying to get the better of the French champion for the time being. They have put up Clemenceau, Millerand, Leygues, Briand, etc.,

<sup>1</sup>Lord Northcliffe died in August 1922.

and it is always represented that I am getting in a knock-out blow. The consequence is that the French representatives are afraid to be reasonable because they fear it will again be said that I have defeated them. Our people do not regard the meetings in this way, and, so far as I am concerned, my only object is to make the best possible arrangement in the interests of all concerned. The whole thing is most unfortunate.

29TH.—Lunched with Winston. Dixon, editor of the *Christian Science Monitor*, was there. We had a long talk about Christian Science. Winston knew nothing about it and asked Dixon to give him an account of the principles of the religion. Dixon made a lucid statement regarding the nebulous theories of this sect.

Winston showed us his pictures and said that painting is the joy of his life—that, until he began to paint, his mind was always preoccupied with politics. Now, with his paint-brush in his hand, he could forget everything.

31ST (SUNDAY).—To Chequers. L. G. is going to the Conference in Paris after all. He told me the French have urgently desired him to go, as they think that, unless he goes, it will be thought there is a rift between Great Britain and France.

We talked of the trials and tribulations of public men.

L. G. : You have to be inured to attacks. I have been attacked for thirty years. I don't remember a single year in which I have not been attacked. Of course for many years I was only a small man, and the attacks were of a different calibre, but they were great attacks to me all the same. I have got used to it, but should not care to begin the experience at the age of fifty. One wants to begin young !

## Chapter XXXVII

*Birkenhead protests his loyalty to L. G.—The Silesia deadlock—The industrious Supreme Council—Bonar Law talks of starting life again—The tragedy of President Deschanel—L. G. visits a deer forest.*

AUGUST 2ND, 1921.—The Lord Chancellor asked me to see him in his private room at the House of Lords.

I congratulated him on his speech on Lord Crewe's motion that the Government business should be postponed to an autumn session—defeated by 124 to 79.

F. E. : I hope you will tell the P.M. that I made a good speech and did my utmost for the Government. I really think that if I had not spoken as I did the result might have been different.

R. : I certainly shall tell him. Your remarks were most skilful and you let yourself go more than usual.

F. E. : It does not do to let oneself go too much or too often in this House. They don't like it. However, I thought this the right occasion. I want you to tell the P.M. this because a number of mischievous people are putting about the report that I am caballing against him. It is an absolute untruth. All my interest lies in supporting him. You know my position in the House of Lords. Even my enemies admit I have done well. Every day I live I feel I am gaining strength.

R. : That is perfectly true. It takes time to build up a reputation for solidarity and strength of character, but you are steadily doing this.

F. E. : I know my powers, and feel I have a right to expect at some distant date to be Prime Minister, but this is not my time. If L. G. were displaced, Chamberlain would be sent for. He is leader of the Tory Party. I am a poor man but can honestly say I would rather pay £20,000, if I had it, than that L. G. should be turned out. He must go to America. He would have a wonderful reception. He is the sort of man Americans

like. They like a man who has risen from the ranks as he and I have done. When I was in America, I found this a great advantage. Then they will like his eloquence—his free and easy ways and the charming, merry twinkle in his eye. I should like to see him go to America and make a great success of the Conference and then go to the country on his return. I should like to see him win the election and remain in power for three or four years or as long as he wanted to remain. You can tell him that secret intrigue is foreign to my nature. What I have to say, I say openly. Furthermore, I am loyal to my friends and I am loyal to him. I want you to tell him all this and to remove from his mind any feeling which may have been engendered by false and malicious reports that I have been caballing against him. If you will do this, you will do me a service as a friend, because I always regard you as a close personal friend. You will be doing him a service and you will be doing the country a service.

I communicated all this to L. G., who seemed much affected and said some nice things about Birkenhead.

7TH (SUNDAY).—With L. G., Curzon and Horne to Paris, to attend meeting of the Supreme Council. I to represent the Press as usual.

L. G. in great form on the journey, and we had an amusing lunch. Curzon is first-rate company, and I never find him pompous. We had an interesting conversation about modern poetry, with which he is well acquainted. I said it was strange there should be no outstanding poem about flying, which seemed to lend itself to poetic treatment. Curzon replied that there were some good verses on the subject, although he admitted they had no great poetic merit. He subsequently wrote me a long letter about this.

Our mission very anti-French regarding the Silesian question, which is the main point for discussion.<sup>1</sup> L. G. vows he

<sup>1</sup>For over a year previously the partition of Upper Silesia had been causing armed conflict between the Germans and the Poles. By June 1921, British and French troops had virtually restored order, but whereas France supported Poland's claim to the valuable industrial region, Britain wished the greater part of it to remain in German hands. A convention between Germany and Poland was signed in May 1922.



will not give way, and the French are equally insistent on their point of view. Everyone in Paris very excited and the gloomiest apprehensions are expressed regarding the probability of a rupture. I told the journalists that I think some way out of the difficulty will be discovered. I know from experience that meetings of the Supreme Council usually start in an atmosphere of gloomy prophecies.

Briand and L. G. dined together on the Sunday night and agreed that the question of reinforcements for Silesia should be postponed pending an attempt to settle the boundaries. If a settlement could be agreed the question of reinforcements would not arise.

8TH AND 9TH.—Kerr's duties have been taken over by Grigg, who gives me practically a verbatim report of the proceedings, much to the satisfaction of the journalists. As heretofore, I have tea with the members of the Council and its officials. This much may be said for all of them: they work early and late. At tea-time the work still continues, and delegates and officials stand about in small groups eagerly discussing the business. It looks as if there will be a deadlock over Silesia. L. G. is still very pro-Greek and much elated at the Greek military successes. He said we always regarded the Turk as a first-class fighting man but even here he has broken down. L. G. told me he believes the Greeks will capture Constantinople, and he evidently hopes they will. He induced the Council to declare neutrality and was careful to say, when informing me of this, that neutrality would not prevent British nationals from assisting the Greeks with money and munitions. Evidently the era of peace has not yet arrived.

Gordon Hewart and Ernest Pollock<sup>1</sup> are here regarding the cases of ill-treatment of prisoners of war. I had a talk with the former concerning his career. He said that under no circumstances would he adopt a political career. He was determined to retire from the House of Commons at the next election. I told him he had all the qualities required to enable him to reach the highest position in the political world and

<sup>1</sup> Sir Ernest Pollock, Solicitor-General, 1919-22; Attorney General, 1922; now Lord Hanworth.

that L. G. held the same opinion. He appeared gratified, but said he was a lawyer who loved the law and did not intend to forsake it for politics.

PARIS: 11TH AND 12TH.—Day of great interest. L. G. in conference with Briand all the morning. At lunch time he went off to Rambouillet to lunch with the President. He was much put out when he drove away. He said to me, "This is most annoying. We had just come to the point of making an arrangement and now I have to go off to keep this engagement, which never ought to have been made." On his return there was a further conference, and later it was announced that L. G. was returning to England on the following morning, owing to the Irish Question. The announcement caused great excitement, particularly as it was understood in the first instance that the whole mission was going. This proved to be an error.

On the Friday morning there was a further conference, after which I saw L. G., who was sitting on the edge of the table in his room. He said, "The Silesian question is to be referred to the League of Nations. What do you think of that?" I thought he was joking, but he assured me he was serious. I came out and made the announcement to some of the newspaper people, all of whom greeted it with derision. Later on I made the announcement formally.

Then I drove with L. G. to the station. In the car he and Grigg dictated to me an account of the later proceedings for communication to the Press—a very jolty drive, and L. G. and Grigg very much on edge.

I dined at the Embassy on Friday night. Curzon, Vansittart and others were there—Curzon in good form. He was very complimentary about L. G.. He said he was a wonderful speaker, that he excelled in invective, persuasion and audacity, in addition to which he had vast experience and enjoyed discussion, whereas most people were bored by it. He loved receiving deputations and took great interest in listening to speeches, however dull they might be. His chief defect was that he was too impulsive and prone to jump to conclusions and to act without sufficient deliberation.

Altogether a very pleasant evening. Vansittart is a charming, efficient person, with literary as well as diplomatic gifts.

On Sunday I returned to London, travelling most of the way with Horne, who commented on the difficulties of his task.

When in Paris I went to dinner one evening with Horne and Miss Stevenson. We went to an outdoor restaurant some five or six miles out of Paris. After dinner Horne danced with great vigour but looked none the better for his labours—quite pale and exhausted, as well he might. It was very hot.

19TH.—Lunched with Lord Lee at the Admiralty. Poor man, he has to undergo a serious operation. I felt sorry for him but he seemed plucky and philosophic about it.

He is concerned about the Washington Conference. He is most anxious that L. G. should go to Washington, or, failing that, Arthur Balfour. Of course he also wants to go himself. I think he would be a good man, as he knows America well and has many friends there. I hear that a serious difference of opinion between the Civil and Naval Lords, regarding their respective powers, has been settled by a reference to the Law Officers.

23RD AND 24TH.—To Sassoon's at Lympne. The P.M., Bonar Law and Miss Stevenson.

B. L. better, but not, I think, quite well. He seems to have lost his snap and talks much of the past. He told me how much he admired L. G. and that he loved talking to him. He thinks L. G. and Birkenhead the two best conversationalists he knows. He agreed with me that L. G.'s continued good health, notwithstanding his hard work and many responsibilities, is due in a great measure to the fact that he deals with matters very much as a lawyer does. He displays great energy, does his best, and, if things do not go his way, does not worry.

B. L. says he has taken a house in Onslow Gardens and must begin life again, but does not quite know what he will do. He said that before his retirement the burden of the House of Commons had become intolerable. He never went there without apprehension, and the fact of having to go robbed the House of all the attractions it formerly had. I suggested he might begin by making occasional speeches. He said he thought he would like this. He spoke of his method of preparing his speeches. He said that until he delivered his Rectorial Address at Glasgow—the speech in which he first exhibited

signs of his breakdown—he had never committed a speech to writing before delivering it. I suggested that perhaps that was why he lost the thread of what he was going to say.

B. L. : That may be so, but when I stood up I was horrified—the whole thing had passed from my mind and I did not in the least know what I was going to say. Luckily it came back.

I said that probably the mind, having once relieved itself of the burden, thought it had done its work, and was surprised again to be called upon to perform.

This rather amused Bonar Law. He said that in the early days, when he was making tariff reform speeches in Glasgow, he drove home one evening after a meeting, with his agent. At the meeting he had spoken for nearly an hour to an audience of working-men. He said to his agent, "I can't think how people can sit and listen to a long speech like that, which probably many of them do not understand." The agent said, "Hardly any of them do understand, but you talk in such a way as to make them think they do."

Much talk about the Irish Question. L. G. said the position was most unsatisfactory. Lord Bessborough came to dinner one night. He brought with him a demand-notice served upon him by the Sinn Fein demanding a levy on his property "to maintain the Irish Army in any contingency which might arise owing to the breakdown of the peace negotiations." He strongly protested against this. L. G. much interested and got Bessborough to give him a copy. L. G. then went on to expatiate on what would happen if the negotiations did break down. It was interesting to see the faces of Lord and Lady Bessborough, which visibly lengthened as they thought of the future.

26TH.—To Sir William Sutherland's wedding at Barnsley. Travelled with L. G., J. T. Davies and Miss Stevenson. Stopped with Sir Joseph Hewitt, where Mrs. L. G. joined us. The bride handsome and very pleasant. Wine flowed freely, and Hewitt made speeches on every possible occasion. At the final dinner, he proposed the health of Mr. and Mrs. L. G. several times. A troublesome person wished at the final dinner to make a speech about L. G. but was vigorously

assailed by Sir Harry Brittain, who made clever, scathing remarks which moved the person in question to violent but impotent rage. He became visibly red and swollen, and for a time it looked as if there might be trouble—at least so L. G. thought.

Travelled by night with Mr. and Mrs. L. G. and J. T. Davies to Edinburgh. Derby, George M'Crae<sup>1</sup> and Ian Macpherson<sup>2</sup> came to lunch. L. G. said he had had some quite nice friendly talks with Asquith lately. Asquith agreed with him that Briand had made a mistake to take office. He should have let someone else take it and then turned him out. He was certain that no one could have managed France's affairs during this critical period without severe criticism.

When in France recently, Derby met Deschanel, the late President of the Republic.<sup>3</sup> He said Deschanel's illness had taken the form of claustrophobia, and that he got out of the railway carriage because he felt that he was oppressed by the confined space. Derby first noticed his condition when he came to dinner at the Embassy one night. He was obviously suffering from delusions, and firmly asserted that gendarmes were in the dining-room. When Derby went to bed he said to his wife, "I am sure the President is mad!" And he was.

The conversation turned on public speaking. Someone told a story about a man with a slow and painful delivery. When his mother-in-law heard her daughter was in the family way she remarked, "I hope her delivery will be quicker and easier than her husband's or she will have a bad time."

L. G. and M'Crae told some good stories about the late Robert Wallace, M.P., a former editor of the *Scotsman*, a witty person. When speaking in the House of Commons on some question relating to market-gardens he said, "I understand market-gardens because I was brought up in one. When I was a boy I used to walk about in my father's market-garden

<sup>1</sup> Sir George M'Crae, Chairman, Scottish Board of Health, 1919-22; d. 1928.

<sup>2</sup> The Rt. Hon. Ian Macpherson, K.C., M.P., Chief Secretary for Ireland, 1918-20; Minister of Pensions, 1920-22.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Deschanel, French President, 1920; died from the effects of a fall from a railway carriage, April 1922.

making speeches to the cabbages, of which the members of the Opposition remind me."

29TH.—Went on with L. G. and Mrs. L. G. to Blair Atholl, where we remained until Wednesday, when we motored to Inverness. The Duke and Duchess most kind and hospitable. It was interesting to see the relics of the chieftain system—kilted pipers after dinner, kilted gamekeepers and servants—all most impressive.

The Duke says he has to pay 18s. 7d. in the £ in taxation and fears he will be unable to continue to live at Blair Atholl. As it is, for a part of the year he occupies a small house on the estate. The Duchess is a talented person and a hard worker. She is a brilliant pianist and has composed some excellent music. She is also a member of the Education Authority and several other local bodies. Although she has artistic qualities, she has a legal mind and is one of the cleverest women I have met. We had a long talk about rating, and she astonished me by her knowledge of legal technicalities. She is said to be an eloquent speaker. L. G. strongly urged her to go into the House of Commons, and she seems disposed to take his advice but, like everyone else, is anxious to get an easy seat.<sup>1</sup> The Duke, however, is master in his own house, and it was amusing to see the firm manner in which he waved the Duchess aside when she wished to explain something he was anxious to explain himself. They seem much devoted to each other.

L. G. and I rode up a mountain 3,500 feet high on ponies. We walked back several miles over the mountains, and then took to the ponies again.

In the days of the land campaign, L. G. and the Duke were bitter opponents, and L. G. made several attacks upon deer forests, etc.. In one speech he described the Duke as standing on one of his mountains and looking round, etc.. The Duke did not fail to remind him of this and told me he was anxious to let L. G. see what a deer forest really was, i.e., not a forest, but a great waste of barren mountains. During the trip he was constantly emphasising this point, so that our

<sup>1</sup> The Duchess has represented Kinross and West Perth in Parliament since 1923 and was Parliamentary Sec. to the Board of Education from 1924-29.

*August 1921]*

## THE PEACE CONFERENCE AND AFTER

visit to the "forest" may be regarded as having been educational as well as recreative.

31st.—From Blair Atholl to Inverness. L. G. had a fine reception which evidently pleased him greatly. He remarked several times, "The people seem very friendly."

We stayed the night at Inverness. L. G. very gloomy. Said he was beginning to feel the reaction.

In the morning he was much brighter and said he hoped I had not been unduly excited by the gaiety of the preceding evening.

There has been a terrific row about a newspaper article sent from America by Northcliffe or on his behalf. However, it has quietened down.

## Chapter XXXVIII

*L. G. meets the Sinn Feiners at Gairloch—Sir Nevil Macready's distaste for reprisals—The Cabinet at Inverness—Sir E. Geddes on the work of the Economy Committee—A De Valera letter leaks out—A hue and cry after a journalist.*

SEPTEMBER 1ST TO 6TH, 1921.—From Inverness we motored to Gairloch.

We found that the Sinn Fein representatives were already there with De Valera's reply.<sup>1</sup> J. T. Davies was despatched to the hotel to fetch them to the house, and in about a quarter of an hour they arrived, walking up the carriage drive, one on each side of J. T.. They handed the reply to L. G., and were out of the house in a few minutes.

L. G. handed me the reply and asked me what I thought of it. I said, "It looks as if they want a conference, but desire to show a bold front for the benefit of their followers." I added that I thought the letter showed they did not intend to insist upon a republic, but to suggest some other method of government involving Irish freedom, with a link between Great Britain and Ireland.

L. G. did not agree with this, and said he thought they intended to fight. He said, "Keep your opinion to yourself. Don't tell J. T., Grigg or Greenwood, who will be here presently, what you think. Let us get their unbiased opinion."

When Grigg and Greenwood arrived they were shown the letter and each went into another room to peruse it. They both agreed with me.

During Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday, everyone was busily engaged discussing the Irish Question, including Macready, who arrived in a destroyer. L. G. proposed holding a Cabinet at Dingwall to consider the Government's answer. I said this would be a mistake, and suggested Inverness, the

<sup>1</sup>Peace overtures had been passing between Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. (now President) De Valera, the Sinn Fein leader, for some weeks prior to this date.



capital of the North, if the meeting was to be held out of London. L. G. agreed, and a Cabinet meeting was called for Inverness. Grigg was very busy preparing alternative draft replies. On Tuesday morning we started for Inverness. While I was dressing, L. G. sent for me, saying he wanted my opinion on the draft letters. I had already urged that the answer should be short and written in clear language, easily understandable by the ordinary man. When I came downstairs, L. G. handed me a draft, which I thought too involved. It was submitted to a vote. The result was a majority of one for the letter.

L. G. stopped with Lord Seaforth at Brahan Castle, where an informal meeting was held to discuss the reply. It consisted of L. G., Winston, Greenwood, Shortt and one or two others who were staying at Brahan.

At Gairloch, L. G. was full of plans for dealing with Ireland should the conference break down. I told him that while I was convinced that 95 per cent. of the British public were strongly in favour of enforcing the maintenance of the union between Great Britain and Ireland, they would not be prepared to support anything in the nature of terrorism. They would not be prepared to combat outrage with outrage. I had several long talks with Macready, who told me he was strongly averse to reprisals. His plan was defined in a memorandum prepared some time ago. Whether L. G. had read it he did not know. Macready said he had never yet been allowed properly to enforce martial law. So far as he was concerned, he would rather die than carry out a reprisals policy. I also had a long talk with Tudor, from which it appeared that the relations between the military under Macready and the police under Tudor were strained. Tudor said the police had been blamed for all the reprisals, whereas in many cases they were due to the soldiers. He also said, and this was confirmed by several police inspectors whom I met, that the Government's propaganda had been very poor, while Sinn Féin's had been very good, with the result that the police had been grossly misrepresented. Tudor confirmed Macready in saying that martial law had never yet been properly tried.

6TH.—I had a long talk with Ian Macpherson when in Edinburgh. He told me, and this was confirmed by Greenwood,

Macready and Tudor, that the Irish Civil Service is honey-combed with inefficiency. On the road from Perth to Inverness we met Sir John Anderson.<sup>1</sup> He told me that the only book Michael Collins reads is *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*, by Chesterton. Very much to the point, I thought.

The negotiations with the Irish have been carried on mainly through Cope, an English Civil Servant, who has been seconded to Ireland.<sup>2</sup> I had a long talk with him. He is intelligent and energetic, but Greenwood thinks he is sadly in want of a holiday and apt to stress the Irish view too much.

The scene at the Cabinet was interesting—Anderson and Cope walking up and down the landing in an agitated fashion, while Macready was seated in a small room adjoining the scene of action, thinking out the possibilities in his direction and also, no doubt, anxious about his daughter, whose confinement was imminent. She produced a son, much to his delight.

After the Cabinet meeting, L. G. sent for me and gave me material for a statement to the Press. He would not give me the contents of the letter to the Sinn Feiners, as he said it was to be kept secret until it had reached them. I asked him whether his colleagues and the officials could be relied upon to keep secrecy. He said, "Of course they can. I won't tell you about the letter now, because it would put you in an awkward position if you were questioned, but I will tell you about it to-morrow." I made my statement to the Press and returned to the hotel. Within ten minutes one of the newspaper men told me privately the contents of the letter, and it was obvious from what was published in various papers on the following morning that a copy must have been shown to a journalist. In addition, information as to what took place must have been supplied by some person in the Cabinet. The letter was delivered to Barton, the Irish representative, in a sealed envelope.

I had a long talk with Eric Geddes about the Economy Committee. He said the Committee was an excellent one and was making good progress, but that Sir Joseph Maclay holds

<sup>1</sup> Joint Under Sec. to Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 1920; Chairman, Board of Inland Revenue, 1919-22.

<sup>2</sup> Now Sir Alfred Cope; Assist. Under Sec. for Ireland and Clerk of the Privy Council (Ireland), 1920-22.

different views from the others. Maclay thinks the proper course in dealing with the Departments is to allocate a certain sum to each Department and tell them they must cut their coat according to their cloth. Geddes, on the other hand, considers that a detailed investigation must be made into the affairs of each Department, and that a reasoned statement must accompany each proposal for economy.

I asked him how Auckland was getting on. He replied, "He has got an awkward job, and I am afraid he feels that the P.M. has rather forgotten him. That is the trouble with the P.M.. He uses his great personal influence to get people to take awkward jobs they don't want to take, and then seems to forget them. Perhaps that may be regarded as a compliment. Perhaps he feels that so long as they are doing well there is no occasion to communicate with them, but his neglect gives rise to feelings of disquietude and unhappiness." I said, "Yes. The P.M. has the defects of his qualities. He is like a pretty woman, who makes a lot of a man, gets him to do something she wants him to do, and then, while she does not drop him in fact, seems to be devoting herself to other admirers from whom, for the time being, she wants something."

GEDDES : That exactly expresses it.

I had a long talk with Sir Joseph Maclay, who told me a number of interesting things about the war. M. said there was one man whose name was not known to the public who had done more for the country during the war than any other man, perhaps. His name was Captain Henderson. He was the man who proposed the convoy system. The Admiral who carried out the scheme was strongly opposed to it, but came to see it was right, and only the other day, like a man, confessed he had been mistaken, and that the convoy system had been the saviour of the country—all due to Henderson. [This is another phase of the much-debated convoy question. Maclay having been Shipping Controller during the war ought to know what he is talking about.]

Maclay confirmed what Geddes had said as to his views on the question of economies. I said I agreed with him. He said, "If you begin to argue with each Department about each item, they will always get the better of you, and you will never

get anything done." I said, "It is the same as in a business. If you want to cut down the cost of a department there is only one way to do it. Tell them they must not spend more than so much."

8TH.—To Brahan Castle to get a copy of reply for distribution to the Press. Found the P.M. and Winston in conclave. I told them that the note had escaped. They were much surprised and expressed strong views. They wanted to know what I thought of the letter. I said, "Very good but not as clear as it might have been for the ordinary man, and I think, the introduction of the word 'tribalism' doubtful." The P.M. said it was a difficult letter to write.

L. G. took me into the sitting-room to show me the tapestries, one of which he said was a copy of a piece in one of the French public offices. It depicted Darius's harem approaching Alexander the Great after capture. L. G. commented humorously on the expressions on the faces of the various ladies; some fearful; some expectant and some appealing.

Shortly after L. G. left for Gairloch and I returned to Inverness to give out the letter to the Press.

9TH.—Went to London. Returned to Gairloch on Sunday night. Arrived on Monday evening. Found L. G. looking rather seedy.

13TH.—The Irish delegates arrived with De Valera's letter. L. G. was out fishing. They came to Flowerdale, where L. G. was staying, at about 6 o'clock and handed him the letter in the secretaries' room. He brought it into the drawing-room and, after reading it, handed it to Grigg and me and asked our opinion of it. We both said the letter was most unsatisfactory, inasmuch as it insisted upon the Irish delegates being received at the Conference as representatives of an independent nation. That admission would establish a point in favour of the Irish which the Cabinet were determined not to concede, as they were prepared to enter the Conference only on the basis of Ireland remaining a part of the British Empire.

L. G. : That is just my opinion. I shall tell them to treat the letter as not having been delivered and to take it back to

De Valera and explain to him and his colleagues that they have made a mistake in writing such a letter and had better redraft it.

He then returned and saw the delegates. He told them that their people were suffering from lack of experienced politicians, who have their uses ; men with experience in public affairs. The delegates asked for an opportunity to talk the matter over. L. G. then returned to the drawing-room. After a time the Irishmen sent for him, and agreed to take the letter back. The delegates then set off for Inverness, where J. T. Davies is staying. We telegraphed asking him to arrange for the delegates to get through on the telephone to Dublin, which they succeeded in doing at about 10 o'clock in the morning. But meanwhile the letter had been disclosed, so that the die was cast and the letter became a *fait accompli*.

14TH.—L. G. became seriously ill with an abscess in his jaw, which he tried to treat by domestic methods. Ultimately it became necessary to call in the local doctor, who brought a dentist from Inverness. Then Dawson was telegraphed for. When he arrived he said a faulty tooth was poisoning L. G.'s system and that unless he had it out the results might be serious. The tooth was ultimately removed by the Inverness dentist, who came accompanied by the local anæsthetist. The local professionals proved most capable, and were highly complimented by Dawson in his usual charming human fashion. Mr. Madoc Davies, an enthusiastic Welsh singer, who is staying in the house, signalled the occasion by indulging in an outburst of "The Men of Harlech" on the piano, just as L. G. was coming out of the gas.

15TH.—L. G. and Grigg busy drafting an answer to De Valera's last letter. Grigg asked me to look through the draft, in which I suggested one or two alterations which were approved by L. G.. By this time the correspondence had developed into a telegraphic controversy which nearly wrecked the small Gairloch post-office. The local postmistress, however, rose to the occasion and did the work extremely well.

On Friday afternoon a further letter arrived by telegraph from De Valera. On Saturday L. G. replied by telegram. Later De Valera sent another letter, the reply to which was drafted

on Sunday, by which time L. G. was sufficiently well to sit in the garden.

Dawson and I went for a long walk. On our return we found that the answer had been completed and that a Glasgow journalist named Fraser was busy taking a copy. He started off for Inverness with his plunder. When I saw the document, I said to L. G. that I thought it far too long and argumentative. He admitted that he was not satisfied with it, and instructed Grigg to cut out several of the paragraphs. A revised draft was prepared in which L. G. made further alterations, and ultimately the letter was settled in a form quite different from the original.

The reply having been despatched, the question then arose what was to be done about the copy which the said Fraser had taken. I dashed down to the telegraph office and tried to send messages to some of the small post-offices between Gairloch and Inverness, so that he might be stopped on the road. But all the post-offices were shut. It then became necessary to telegraph to Inverness asking the Chief Constable to watch for Fraser and request him to send back the letter. I also telegraphed to the post-office at Inverness instructing them not to despatch the document if it were handed in, and also to the *Glasgow Herald* asking them not to use the document should they receive it. The Chief Constable managed to intercept Fraser on his arrival at Inverness at about 10.30, and the copy letter was sent back from Inverness to Gairloch, arriving at about four in the morning, much to the annoyance of the dogs of the district, who were unaccustomed to such disturbances and expressed themselves by steady barking which aroused the whole neighbourhood.

Winston Churchill arrived, and we had an interesting chat at dinner. L. G. gave a graphic account of the speech made by Parnell in the House of Commons after his downfall. L. G. said it was a tremendous performance—the tall, gaunt, black-haired, pale-faced figure, and the voice which sounded like the crack of a whip. He lashed his enemies in a way that made them cower on the bench. Even Gladstone, accustomed as he was to Parliamentary invective, seemed to be shrinking from this terrific man.

Much talk about unemployment. Mond, Macnamara and other Ministers summoned to Gairloch. Much discussion. At night, Winston, Dawson, Grigg and I sat up talking until a late hour. A memorable conversation.

Another letter arrived from De Valera. As the reply was to be the final declaration by the Government the draft was a matter for serious consideration. Its terms were discussed at length by the Ministers present at Gairloch. Birkenhead arrived in Sir R. P. Houston's yacht—a magnificent affair, a small floating palace. Houston and Lady H. kind and hospitable. Several draft letters were prepared and placed side by side on the same piece of paper. Ultimately the final draft was evolved and sent out to the Cabinet for their approval.

Much talk about Washington. Winston strong that L. G. should go. Incidentally A. J. Balfour came under notice. L. G. said he heard that A. J. B. was dominating the League of Nations. Winston said, laughing heartily, that if you wanted nothing done, A. J. B. was undoubtedly the best man for the task. There was no one to equal him.

The Ministers evidently did not enjoy Gairloch and presented a somewhat disconsolate appearance. One night after dinner a sort of conference was held in the hall. Present : L. G., Winston, Mond, Macnamara, Montagu, Hilton Young, Grigg, Dawson and myself. L. G., reclining on a couch, made a long, impassioned speech on financial questions. Mrs. L. G., who was in an adjoining room, remarked that he was talking as if he were at a public meeting. He said, and Winston repeated, that the state of the exchanges was the most serious question of the day. Winston was emphatic in pointing out that the country was being sacrificed upon the altar of the banks. L. G. said the question was whether, at the instance of banks and financiers, we had not deflated too much, and whether the Germans would not derive great advantages from their inflationary methods. He believed they would stabilise their currency before long, fixing the value of the mark at some low figure. That would enable them to pay off their internal national debt on very easy terms, so that the German Debt would be reduced from £12,000 millions to £600 millions while ours would remain at £8,000 millions. He also talked

a great deal about foreign credits and other topics. When he had finished, he asked Hilton Young's opinion. Rather a large order for poor Hilton Young at such short notice. He expressed the Treasury point of view that the proper course was to leave things as they are.

One evening at dinner, Macready and I had a discussion with L. G. on the eternal subject of the Greeks and Turks. Macready and I contended that it was a mistake to back the Greeks. L. G., who feels very strongly on this subject, bitterly resented our remarks.

Having had a busy, wet and interesting holiday mainly spent in preparing and despatching telegrams, I left Gairloch on the 24th.

My impression is that the Inverness meeting was not popular with the Ministers. They did not fancy the call to the North. On the whole I think it was a mistake.



## Chapter XXXIX

*How Balfour evaded an ultimatum—L. G. on the "impossible" Irish—Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins—Bonar Law champions Ulster—"No friendships at the top."*

OCTOBER 8TH, 1921.—To Chequers. Bonar Law there—also Sir Robert McAlpine. I had to leave for Southampton at 8.30 on the following morning.

Bonar Law told a good story of Balfour. It arose in this way. L. G. said there was a movement to make Grey head of the "Wee Free" Party, and gave an amusing account of an interview between Asquith and Grey. He also said he had heard that McKenna was meditating coming out as a Conservative candidate. Both L. G. and Bonar Law said they did not see how he could do this, although they thought he might come out as an Independent. B. L. said, "I know you do not agree with me about Grey. You think him ambitious. I don't!"

L. G. : I think him ambitious in the same way that Balfour is.

B. L. : I don't agree with that. They are quite different people.

Then Bonar Law told his story of an ultimatum from the Conservative Party, which was to be presented by Chaplin to Balfour before a meeting of the party. Balfour had determined not to receive the ultimatum. When he saw Chaplin enter the drawing-room of the house in which he was staying, he took the hostess to one of the pictures and made some comments upon it, then moved to another, and so on until he got to the door, when he said, "Good night ! I think I must go to bed !" Chaplin, who is a slow mover, was following him round the room vainly. By the time he reached the door, A. J. B. was in his bedroom. In the morning he did not get up until after the meeting had started, so never got the ultimatum.

We had much talk about unemployment, including a long argument about the course of foreign trade, etc., in which

L. G. demonstrated his point by diagrams drawn on sheets of notepaper. I cannot say that we got to anything very practical, except that everyone seemed to be agreed that immediate steps should be taken to start works of utility at home which would give employment. L. G. made a characteristic observation. "When trade is slack, you paint your factory and get it ready for new business. That is what we ought to be doing." He also said, referring to the question of exchange, currency, inflation, etc., "We have got to learn that realities are the things that matter—not tokens. We have got to go back to the things themselves. We are too much accustomed to discuss all these problems in terms of money, instead of remembering that money only represents commodities, labour, and so on." McAlpine said some good things about starting engineering works, etc.. It was amusing to note how his views were all tinged by the fact that he is a contractor.

14TH.—Sir Campbell Stuart and Sir Harold Boulton, the song-writer, lunched with me. The latter a first-rate conversationalist. Referring to Bottomley he said an amusing thing. His motto should be, "Don't burn your boats ! Burn your books !"

16TH (SUNDAY).—To Chequers—the P.M., Mrs. L. G., Olwen and Megan. The P.M. had to go to London after dinner.

He had been busy dictating his unemployment speech—a long business. He said his intention was to go to Washington, but it was impossible to say what might happen between now and the date of sailing. Much depended on the Irish Conference. Honestly he could not say any progress had been made. His experiences during the discussion with De Valera had been repeated. He could get nothing definite. The delegates were impossible people. They came to the point, but would not come to decisions. He really could not say why. He could not say whether they did not want to do so or whether they were afraid. Secret advices from Ireland stated that there was a schism in the ranks of the Sinn Feiners. The moderate section wanted a settlement, whereas the gunmen did not. Arthur Griffith was no doubt the leader, but unfortunately he had no power of expression. It was difficult to understand what he

aid. He spoke rather like —, a clever, but incoherent, Welshman. Michael Collins was undoubtedly a considerable person. L. G. thinks that during the next fortnight the Irish Conference will come to an end one way or another. He said that if a settlement is reached he may have to stay to get it through the House of Commons, as there may be considerable opposition.<sup>1</sup>

We spoke of Henry Wilson. I said, "He is very disgruntled just now. He is angry about Ireland and the state of the world generally, which of course he ascribes to the 'little rocks.'"

I referred to a speech which I had heard Wilson make the other night at the Guildhall.

L. G. : Yes, he is very difficult. I am not sorry he is going. His time is up in January.

21ST.—Two friendly, amusing post-cards from Northcliffe.

Kennedy Jones is dead. At one time he was prominent in the newspaper world. He started as a reporter in Glasgow. He migrated to London and later became associated with Northcliffe and Rothermere. He is said to have retired with a large fortune. When I first knew him, he was earning quite a small salary as chief reporter on the defunct *Morning*. He was a very able journalist. He had the reputation of being difficult to get on with, but I always found him pleasant and friendly. He was only 56 when he died. I am afraid that his parliamentary experiences disappointed him. He found the House of Commons a tougher proposition than he had anticipated.

23RD (SUNDAY).—Went to Cliveden to lunch with Lord and Lady Astor. The P.M., Mrs. L. G., Grigg, Kerr, Brand and others. The P.M. left shortly after lunch. I left after tea.

Lavish hospitality and much merriment, music and dancing. Lady A. most amusing. She would have made a great hit as an actress.

L. G. in talking of the Round Table Group<sup>2</sup>—largely represented at Lady A.'s party, (Grigg, Kerr and Brand)—remarked,

<sup>1</sup> Actually a settlement was not reached until December 6th.

<sup>2</sup> Responsible for publishing the *Round Table* magazine, which deals with high political questions, especially of foreign policy.

"It is a very powerful combination—in its way perhaps the most powerful in the country. Each member of the Group brings to its deliberations certain definite and important qualities, and behind the scenes they have much power and influence." Other members of the Group are Curtis and Hichens.

30TH (SUNDAY).—To Chequers to lunch. Sir William and Lady Sutherland and a Miss Marshall from Geneva the only other visitors.

I am booked to sail in the *Aquitania* on Saturday. Both L. G. and Sutherland are not in favour of my going. The P.M. said anything may happen shortly at home, and he thought I should be more useful here than in America. He thought the Washington Conference would open with a great blare of trumpets, that the papers would be full of reports for a week or so, and that then the proceedings would begin to lose interest. All this in the garden, where we were sitting after lunch.

During the conversation L. G. said, "In the course of the next few days I may have to come to a vital decision. The points are these. It looks as if the Sinn Feiners will accept the sovereignty of the King, that they will agree to remain part of the British Empire, and will also agree to give us all the facilities we want for the Navy, but they will demand Tyrone and Fermanagh, and that the Customs, Excise, etc., and the Post Office shall be controlled by the over-riding Parliament, instead of by the Northern and Southern Parliaments. The Ulster people will never agree and the question will then arise whether the English people are prepared to fight in order to support them. There is no doubt that in principle, the country is hardening against the Sinn Feiners, but the point is whether people are prepared to give effect to their principles."

L. G. added that on further acquaintance he thought Arthur Griffith<sup>1</sup> a pretty considerable man. Michael Collins was quite a different sort of person—one with a simple sort of mind such as is often found in a great military commander.

The delegates were said to be very angry about De

<sup>1</sup>d. 1922.

Valera's message to the Pope, emphasising the Irish claim for independence.

R. : Do you think the delegates want to settle ?

L. G. : Yes, I am sure they do, but I doubt whether they will be prepared to give way on the three points mentioned. The prospect is very awkward.

L. G. did not tell me so, but I know that on Friday he and Birkenhead put certain questions in writing to the Irish delegates. L. G. said that a letter from the Irish had come to Chequers on Saturday night. Then he began to search for it in his pockets, but could not find it. He said, " I really don't know what I have done with it. I must have left it in my room ! " Then he hurried off to find it and eventually retrieved it and stowed it away safely in his breast pocket.

L. G. left for London in Megan's little car, driven by her—a curious sight—L. G. almost as big as the car.

31ST.—When talking with Robert Donald about the *Life* of Sir Edward Cook, just issued, Donald told me why he had got rid of Cook from the *Daily Chronicle*. At that time a big political fight was on, and Cook was writing the leaders. It was said by the powers-that-were that Cook had no fire in his belly. Consequently Donald got Mr. Lloyd, the proprietor, to get rid of Cook. A curious little side-light !

NOVEMBER 3RD.—Called at Downing Street. I explained to L. G. that, having made arrangements with the Press to represent them at the American Conference, I had no alternative but to fulfil my engagement and was starting on the *Aquitania* on Saturday.

L. G. : I am sorry you are going, but it cannot be helped. I think under the circumstances you have no alternative.

R. : When will you come to Washington ?

L. G. : Perhaps never. Things look very awkward. Bonar Law has come out as the advocate of Ulster. Whether he thinks he sees his opportunity to become Prime Minister or whether he is solely actuated by a conscientious desire to champion the cause of Ulster I don't know, but I can hardly bring myself to believe that he would desire to supplant me. However, as I have often told you, " there are no friendships at the top." Notwithstanding this, I have always regarded Bonar

Law as different from other politicians and as a sincere friend and supporter.

[I met the Lord Chancellor two or three days ago. He made the cryptic remark that sometimes a situation is seriously altered by the unexpected intervention of someone of whom one had not thought. "For example," he said, "supposing Arthur Balfour had suddenly appeared as a strong opponent of the proposals for the Irish settlement, his intervention might have rendered it impossible. That is the sort of situation we have to deal with now." But F. E. did not disclose the name of the unexpected intervener. This was supplied, as appears, by L. G..]

L. G. : I am not going to continue the Irish war if a settlement is possible. I shall resign, and the King will have to send for someone else. Probably you will get a telegram when you are in America saying I have resigned and am off to the South of France for a holiday, which I shall be only too glad to get. Sinn Fein are prepared to accept allegiance to the Crown and to agree that Ireland shall remain part of the Empire, subject to Tyrone and Fermanagh being joined to Southern Ireland or, at any rate, to a plebiscite, and subject also to the Irish fiscal, postal and telegraphic arrangements being relegated to a central Parliament to be elected on the basis of population. If the matter can be settled on those lines, I am not prepared to continue civil war.

R. : Of course, such a settlement would hit the Ulster people from two angles—one sentimental and the other economic. A central Parliament in which Ulster would be in a minority of three to one might with the best intentions impose duties, etc., that would be ruinous for Ulster.

L. G. : It might be possible to get Sinn Fein to agree to safeguards.

R. : Of course, that would alter the situation entirely.

L. G. : The position is very precarious, and it is giving me a lot of worry. In fact, I have been more worried about it than I have in regard to any matter since the war troubles in the Spring of 1918. Both sides are equally unreasonable. However, we shall see what we shall see.

## Chapter XL

*Off to Washington—A curious incident on board—President Harding opens the Disarmament Conference—Balfour makes a good impression—An Ambassador's expenses—The best-paid journalist in the world—Press arrangements at the Conference.*

NOVEMBER 5TH, 1921.—Sailed on the *Aquitania* for the Disarmament Conference at Washington. A pleasant voyage.

Was greeted in New York with much enthusiasm by my journalistic colleagues.

[NOTE. A curious incident took place during the voyage. A large party of Zionists, *en route* for New York, requested me to take the chair at a meeting they held on board ship. I did what they wanted, assuming, and I think rightly, that the request was made because I was in the newspaper business. However, later on, the Purser in his *Reminiscences*<sup>1</sup> gave a different reason. He says :

“ There was a large party of very representative Jewish gentlemen on board. . . . A committee from this party called on me to ask permission to hold a Jewish convention in the main dining saloon, which was very readily granted.

“ They consulted me as to whom it would be advisable to ask to take the chair and preside, there being so many prominent Jews on board not connected with the Zionist party. I suggested that the most prominent Jew on board was Lord Riddell.

“ Being respectfully approached by the Zionist committee, he wondered why on earth they chose him but consented to preside at their meeting.

“ After everyone was seated, a Jewish rabbi, with a beard like Aaron's, arose from his chair to introduce Lord Riddell. He commenced by saying that they had just returned from Jerusalem, and how the Zionist movement was flourishing, thanks to that greatest of all living statesmen, Mr. A. J. Balfour of England.

<sup>1</sup> *Reminiscences of Transatlantic Travellers*, by Charles T. Spedding (T. Fisher Unwin).

"After eulogising Mr. Balfour in the most flowery rhetoric, he finally said, 'And if Mr. Balfour, who is a Christian, has been the greatest friend to Jewry, who has been the greatest friend to Balfour?' And then with a dramatic flourish he turned to point at Lord Riddell, saying, 'There he sits, *a Jew*; Lord Riddell.' After a pause for effect, he continued, 'Gentlemen, allow me to introduce you to your Chairman.'

"The look on Lord Riddell's face would be worth a pound a second on the movies; it registered astonishment, alarm, consternation, indignation and every other feeling that movie stars are paid so handsomely to produce.

" 'Ladies and Gentlemen,' he stammered in reply, 'whilst I have taken very great interest in the Zionist movement, I am afraid there is a mistake somewhere, for whilst I have every admiration for the Jewish nation, I am sorry to say I am not a Jew.'

"Everybody roared with laughter except the old rabbi, with whom I had a stormy five minutes after the meeting. I lied earnestly to him, saying that I always thought Lord Riddell was Lord Reading's cousin, and that as he was always talking about the Zionist movement at table, I never dreamt he wasn't a Jew.

"If Lord Riddell ever reads this book, it will be the first information he has had as to why he was asked to preside at a Jewish convention, but, loving a joke as he does, I know I will be forgiven."

Mr. Spedding's account of his conversations with the Jews may or may not be accurate. His account of the meeting is a piece of pure imagination. However, it is a good story.]

12TH.—I attended the opening Session of the Disarmament Conference in the large hall of the Pan-American Building. Except that there is no stage, it is rather like a theatre. The ceremony was a brilliant affair, with plenty of flash-light photographs. In a way, it rather resembled a public meeting—much clapping of hands and great enthusiasm. The delegates sat at a huge horse-shoe table. In front of them were masses of newspaper men. The galleries were crowded with Senators and Congressmen, and the boxes with ladies. Cables were laid direct from the basement to London, so that the speeches were flashed across the Atlantic with amazing rapidity. These arrangements were largely due to the enterprise and



ingenuity of Mr. Douglas Williams, Reuters' representative.

President Harding<sup>1</sup> opened the proceedings by reading a speech which I thought rather poor stuff. He is a good-looking man of the florid type. His delivery is reminiscent of that of an earnest town councillor—much unction and rolling of the head when he makes his points. Having made his speech he retired. Hughes, the Secretary of State, then took the floor. He is a great lawyer and an admirable speaker, but like the President, he read his speech. He is determined-looking, has a fine voice and gives one the idea of being very capable. His epoch-making proposals, which will appear at length in the newspapers, had been kept a dead secret, and so came as a surprise to everyone present, although some of us knew that he was going to say something startling. His introduction, dealing with general principles, was rather long and tedious, but the latter part of his speech, in which he developed his proposals, was very much to the point and framed with considerable skill. Instead of apologising to the American public, he, so to speak, hurled his proposals at them. He had a great ovation.

While Hughes was speaking, A. J. B. made notes on an envelope, according to his custom. (With his usual foresight Hankey realised that envelopes would be required and sent out and bought some of the right size before the meeting.) He looked rather old and frail, and it was obvious that the Americans thought poor old Britain was going to make a feeble show. Quite the contrary happened. A. J. B. made an excellent speech. I have not seen him in such good form for years. His voice was strong, and he gave one a sense of enthusiasm he seldom displays. The speech evoked rounds of applause, and we all felt very proud of him. Briand, who followed, was eloquent and dramatic as usual. From an oratorical point of view, the Old World more than held its own.

I sat with Hankey just behind A. J. B.. While Hughes was speaking I suggested to Hankey that he should ask Balfour to make a statement describing British losses in the war. Hankey agreed, hunted up the figures and handed Balfour a note. B. made full and effective use of the figures

<sup>1</sup> U.S. President, 1920-23; d. 1923.

LORD RIDDELL'S INTIMATE DIARY OF [November 1921  
and subsequently gave me Hankey's note which read as  
follows :

MR. BALFOUR,

Riddell thinks you might like to say a word about our sacrifices  
—largely for France. The figures, which I supplied to him, are over-  
leaf. Riddell thinks it would be useful to get them out to the American  
public.

M. P. A. H.

And the figures were :

*British Casualties during War*  
4th Aug. 1914—11th Nov. 1918

*Naval Casualties*

|           |   |   |   |   |        |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|--------|
| Deaths    | . | . | . | . | 43,434 |
| Wounded   | . | . | . | . | 25,323 |
| Prisoners | . | . | . | . | 5,722  |
| Total     | . | . | . | . | 74,479 |

*Military Casualties*

|           |   |   |   |   |           |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|-----------|
| Deaths    | . | . | . | . | 885,060   |
| Wounded   | . | . | . | . | 2,093,614 |
| Prisoners | . | . | . | . | 191,711   |
| Total     | . | . | . | . | 3,170,385 |

*R.A.F. Casualties*

|         |   |   |   |   |       |
|---------|---|---|---|---|-------|
| Deaths  | . | . | . | . | 3,299 |
| Wounded | . | . | . | . | 2,989 |
| Total   | . | . | . | . | 6,288 |

*Mercantile Marine Casualties*

|        |   |   |   |   |        |
|--------|---|---|---|---|--------|
| Deaths | . | . | . | . | 15,571 |
|--------|---|---|---|---|--------|

*Total Deaths*

|         |
|---------|
| 43,434  |
| 885,060 |
| 3,299   |
| 15,571  |
| <hr/>   |
| 947,364 |



THE LATE LORD BALFOUR AND MR. C. E. HUGHES, U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE,  
driving through the streets of Washington

Hankey is a remarkable person. He can always produce facts and figures at the shortest notice.

Afterwards lunched with A. J. B., who was most kind and gracious. Hankey the other guest. B. told us that Hughes had been with him for two hours on the previous afternoon, that he had said he intended to make an important statement of policy, but did not divulge any details, or give any indication of the real importance of his statement. Balfour and Hankey expressed themselves as being most favourably impressed with Hughes's proposals, which A. J. B. described as bold and statesmanlike. In communicating his views to the Press, I took the liberty of adding on my own account, "and pregnant with possibilities." We had a long chat about Hughes's plan. Hankey produced a clever diagram showing how the fleets would stand if the scheme were adopted. He and Balfour were of opinion that political exigencies—the parsons on the one hand, and the business men demanding economy on the other—had greatly influenced the American Government in making these proposals, but that Harding and Hughes were personally sincerely anxious to bring about a reduction of armaments in the interests of peace.

A. J. B. was most anxious to hear news of the Irish situation, and much interested in what I told him. He acutely said that in default of a settlement the best plan would be to decline to coerce either Ulster or the South of Ireland, but to tell Sinn Fein that we should protect Ulster against any attacks they might make. A. J. B. said he felt certain that Bonar Law was actuated solely by patriotic and conscientious motives and had no wish to seize the opportunity to oust L. G..

Hankey spoke of his son's success at Rugby. I said, "That is the sort of pleasure reserved only for happy parents."

A. J. B. : I don't quite agree. I have twelve nephews and nieces who have made my house their home, and can honestly say that so far as one can see no man ever had greater satisfaction out of his own family than I have had out of my nephews and nieces.

He said this with real affection. I have never seen him so enthusiastic and alert as he is just now. Very keen on the

success of the Conference. He said he hoped L. G. would come to Washington and asked me to write him to that effect.

15TH (*et seq.*).—I have had a busy week and think I am justified in saying that my meetings with the Press have been a complete success. The American Government have made most kind and generous arrangements for my comfort. They have given me a fine suite of offices in the Navy Building, including a large room in which I make my statements to the Press. They have also supplied me with a motor-car, which I find very useful. The meetings are largely attended by reporters and leader-writers representing newspapers of many nationalities—British, American, Japanese, French, German, etc.. Sometimes the audience comprises a hundred or more. Most of the representatives are American. The newspaper people, including the ladies, are a jolly lot—very appreciative and courteous. After the meetings I answer questions. Sometimes I get an odd one. A young lady reporter asked me privately whether I was a blood peer. I replied, "If you use the term in the sense in which we speak of pedigree cattle, the answer is in the negative."

I see the Press twice a day and in the evening attend another meeting, taking with me one of our delegates who makes a statement about his part of the work and answers questions. Early in the week I had to make a strong stand. The arrangements for supplying information were most unsatisfactory. I saw A. J. B. and Hankey, and told them that information must be supplied on a regular plan. Ultimately it was arranged that I should see Hankey every morning at 8.45. This arrangement has worked well.

One marked feature of this Conference is the attention paid to the Press. Hughes sees the reporters daily, and all the other delegations give similar facilities. The Chinese and Japanese have most elaborate publicity arrangements. Hankey is the heart and soul of the official mission. He manages the whole thing with extraordinary ability and works hand in hand with A. J. B. with first-class results. They came here *via* Canada. A. J. B. was very sea-sick on the voyage. Nevertheless he and Hankey did an amazing amount of preparatory work.

These "twins" are certainly the most efficient persons attending the Conference.

I lunched with M. Jusserand, the French Ambassador, and his wife. He is a great authority on English history and gave Hankey and me a vivid account of the beginnings of the English Navy. Very curious to come 3,000 miles to hear such things from a French Ambassador!

I gave a dinner to the Press on November 25th. About 150 present. Balfour, Auckland Geddes, Hankey and others attended. A. J. B. proposed my health in a nice speech. The whole thing a great success.

The relations between Lee and Beatty are strained. I dined at the British Embassy with Auckland Geddes and his wife, a charming woman. Geddes is rather perturbed about the Lee-Beatty situation.

Geddes says he will be unable to remain here long as he cannot afford it. The expenses of the Embassy are enormous, about £20,000 a year. His salary and allowances do not cover what he spends, and he cannot afford to go on. He is popular here and has done his job well. He is kind and observant, so much so that a facetious member of the delegation alleges that the Ambassador brings his medical knowledge to bear on his work and, as a result, wrote in one of his despatches, "When I called upon Mr. Blank, I noticed a twitching in such and such a muscle, which showed me at once that he was uneasy. With this indication I soon discovered the cause, etc.."

By arrangement with Preston, who looks after the Press at the Navy Building, I visited an American elementary school and said a few words to the children. An interesting experience. Every day the children salute the American flag and make a sort of oath to it. In my honour, they sang the American National Anthem. Then the head teacher, a nice woman, said, "Now the children will sing the British National Anthem." To my surprise they sang "Rule Britannia!"

16TH.—Wilberforce (great grandson of the Wilberforce who freed the slaves), a nice fellow, asked me to go with him to the Howard College for Negroes and make a speech—a curious experience. There were about 1,500 Negro students of both sexes present. They gave Wilberforce a great ovation.

It was a romantic experience to stand on the platform side by side with the direct descendant of the man who struck the first blow for the freedom of the black races. I spoke for about three-quarters of an hour and had a great reception.

Lunched with A. J. B., who was much interested in my experience with the Negroes.

17TH.—Long chat with Arthur Brisbane, Hearst's star writer, and perhaps the most highly paid journalist in the world. He is said to receive the equivalent of £20,000 per annum salary or more.

He is a wonderful writer, possessing the art of appealing to the common man or woman and also of stating or misrepresenting a case in a most specious and attractive manner. He is energetic, rather round-faced, and kindly-looking, with enquiring blue eyes behind spectacles. He speaks in a quick, sharp, decided way. He told me that he was educated in France. He discussed the Hearst policy very freely and was at pains to impress me with the magnitude of Hearst's influence.

Brisbane said that he dictates his articles into a dictaphone. Sometimes he does this in the train. He makes corrections as he proceeds, saying, "alter this," "substitute so-and-so for so-and-so." The matter is then taken off the dictaphone by the stenographer, who types it just as dictated. Brisbane's secretary then puts it in order, and often Brisbane never sees a proof. Evidently he has wonderful facility, the facility that comes to a man of great natural powers who has been writing for the Press for thirty years or more. In addition to being a great leader-writer, he is a wonderful note and gossip writer, picking out all kinds of interesting subjects upon which he makes novel and interesting notes. Brisbane has been very critical concerning the Conference, and not at all friendly to Great Britain. This is the kind of thing he has been writing: "Britain is represented by expert statesmen accustomed to this sort of negotiation. Mr. Balfour, for example, comes of a family which has been doing this class of work for England since the time of Queen Elizabeth. He is a past master at the game. America on the other hand is represented by a lot of inexperienced duds, with the result that Britain always comes out on top and walks off with the goods."

## Chapter XLI

*An interview with President Harding—The naval ratio agreement—American interest in China—To Cannes with L. G.—The famous golf match with Briand—Poincaré proposes a military convention—L. G. again talks of resignation.*

DECEMBER 1ST, 1921.—Spent half an hour with President Harding—a fine upstanding sort of American—much like the Mayor of a provincial town who has been promoted to some high office—a typical local politician of the superior sort, with a clear, simple mind which enables him to go to the heart of a subject. All this accompanied by a good deal of unction and commonplace.

We talked about newspaper matters. It was interesting to discuss advertising rates, price of paper and other newspaper topics with the President of the American Republic in the heart of the White House! He gave me a copy of his paper, *The Marion Star*, and explained how he had arranged to carry it on during his absence. He said he had made it a sort of co-operative concern and that everyone employed had an interest. He said they were getting on well in his absence—perhaps better than if he had been there, and referred with pride to the fact that on Fridays they bring out a 32-page paper, “Not bad!” said he, “for a small town of 30,000 inhabitants.” I congratulated him on his speech at the opening of the Session. He said, in rather a pathetic way, I thought, “I think it was a speech that would have attracted attention had it not been overshadowed by Mr. Hughes’s speech, which contained *our* (with emphasis on the *our*) definite programme regarding naval affairs.” Of course I agreed with him. It was obvious there was a certain amount of *arrière-pensée* in his observations, and that he rather felt Hughes had got all the limelight. I said, “It would create much satisfaction in England if you could give some message of friendship to the English-speaking people.”



He cleverly dodged the issue by saying he had already done this in a speech delivered on October 19th. He sent for this and asked me to read it carefully. I did and found it a very mild utterance, beginning with a strong hash-up of American patriotic stuff about the doings of America in the "War of Independence." We talked about the pessimistic attitude towards disarmament. I said that men had tried to fly for a thousand years and had at length succeeded in spite of prognostications to the contrary, and that it was quite probable that nations would succeed in establishing an era of peace notwithstanding the difficulties. This pleased him. He said in answer, "I quite agree. I said yesterday, individuals used to settle their disputes by duelling. The practice has entirely disappeared. Why should not nations give up the practice of duelling?" I said, "Why not?" and there the interview ended. But I omitted to point out that the analogy was not quite satisfactory, as individual rights were protected by the law courts and the policeman, whereas there was no international policeman except public opinion, which was not always mobilised in sufficient time to prevent warfare.

10TH.—Much distressed by Arthur Pearson's<sup>1</sup> tragic death. He and I have been closely associated for many years. His war work was a severe trial to him. The hospital authorities used to employ him to break the news to wounded men that they would not recover their sight. This terrible task he performed with the utmost bravery. When he himself went blind I had a memorable talk with him.

C. A. P. : I can do one of two things—I can either become a self-centred recluse like old Pulitzer or I can go out and work for the blind.

R. : The second alternative is more your line of country. It will do you a lot of good to go to public functions and make speeches.

C. A. P. : I don't think I could stand it.

R. : You would have a tremendous reception.

C. A. P. (laughing) : Well, I shall try it, and if it is a failure I shall blame you !

<sup>1</sup>Sir Arthur Pearson, Bart., the newspaper and periodical proprietor.

R. : I much like your idea about working for the blind. You will benefit both them and yourself. When the Lord advised the rich young man to give all he had to the poor, He was not thinking of benefiting the poor. He had in mind the beneficial effects of giving on the giver.

C. A. P. : I never understood the parable in that sense. Anyway, I shall try the prescription !

He did—with remarkable effects. He will long be remembered for his noble work. I shall greatly miss him, with his bright cheery ways and brilliant conversation.

12TH.—I had taken my passage on the *Aquitania* for to-morrow, but the Delegation passed a resolution urging me to stay. On December 5th Mr. Balfour cabled to Lord Curzon saying that I had taken my passage for December 13th ; that it was difficult to over-estimate the value of my work in America, which was, so he said, appreciated by the Americans no less than the British. He was kind enough to add that my continued assistance was almost essential in the critical stages of the Conference ahead, and that the British publicity arrangements would be seriously dislocated by my withdrawal. He said that these views were shared by the whole of the British Empire Delegation and asked the Prime Minister to use his influence to induce me to stay.

On December 7th Mr. Lloyd George cabled to me saying he was sure from long experience that my continued presence in Washington was necessary for the success of our publicity arrangements and that he viewed any dislocation of these with the greatest anxiety. He added that my departure might give rise to misunderstanding among Americans, who had spoken in most appreciative terms of my assistance. He said he would be most grateful if I could see my way to remain with Mr. Balfour, adding facetiously, " though we should all welcome you back to lighten this foggy atmosphere."

Consequently I agreed to stop for another ten days. A. J. B., Geddes, Hankey and Lee all said nice things, and told me they thought I had done more than anyone else to influence American opinion in favour of Great Britain. I have never had so many compliments in my life.

15TH.—The naval ratio was settled to-day—not a bad

settlement I think, under the circumstances. But one of the naval experts told me last night that he was anxious and dissatisfied. He said, "It is impossible to deal satisfactorily with technical questions such as those involved in the naval discussions between Balfour, Hughes and Kato,<sup>1</sup> without the presence and assistance of experts." He added that A. J. B. had resolutely declined to admit the experts.

16TH.—Called to see Lee. He said that on the whole he was satisfied with the settlement, but there were several points which might and should have been settled differently. He added that A. J. B. had taken some big decisions on his own account. This was confirmed by Hankey.

I told Balfour this morning that he should see the Press to explain the effect of the ratio agreement from the British point of view. He agreed, and I went to lunch to discuss the matter. He asked me what I thought he should say and I gave him my views. He told me that a firm of publishers had offered him £20,000 for his autobiography.

As we drove up to the Navy Building, he remarked, "I am very nervous and wish I had not come. I hate facing all these newspaper men." I replied, "There is nothing to worry about. They will give you a great reception." He smiled and said, "I suppose I must go through with it." Of course he had a great reception. He made a fine little speech, answered questions gaily, and left in a cloud of glory, highly delighted and, as he said, very grateful to me. He is always charming if one does him even a small service.

22ND.—Started for home after a very strenuous six weeks. The American Press treated me remarkably well and the American newspapers were full of my doings.

23RD.—While at Washington lunched several times with Wickham Steed, editor of *The Times*—a brilliant person who speaks French and Italian like a native. He is a good talker and most amusing. He wears a pointed, close-cropped beard, turning iron-grey, which gives him a foreign look.

The newspaper men gave me a banquet at which there was

<sup>1</sup>Admiral Kato, one of the three Japanese delegates; d. 1923.

*December 1921]* THE PEACE CONFERENCE AND AFTER  
a large gathering. They presented me with a handsome silver box, bearing the inscription :

LORD RIDDELL

From the newspaper correspondents of the world at the Conference on  
Limitation of Armaments.

WASHINGTON

DECEMBER 1921

Many nice things were said about me and my work. I have been so busy that I have not had time to do much with the diary. There are one or two interesting items I have omitted to note. Briand told me that his stay in Washington had been a misery, for one thing because the food did not suit him, and for another because he found himself in an uncongenial atmosphere. The French, by the way, are furious with me for disclosing their naval proposals. The news made a great sensation all the world over. American papers, in particular, had vast scare headlines. The French thought that our Mission had leaked. As a matter of fact, I picked the news up by accident from a man I knew on another delegation.

I went with Balfour to New York to attend a big public dinner, at which he made a fine speech.

There is a good deal of misconception about this Conference. The Americans are keen on settling naval matters, but are far keener on establishing good relations with China, which they regard as the best outlet for their goods, etc.. In Paris President Wilson fought hard for the Chinese and was much perturbed at the decisions arrived at. In Washington the air is permeated with China. The Chinese case was prepared by Americans, and every effort is being made to ingratiate America with the Chinese. The American Government were very keen on settling the Anglo-American-Japanese question. Japan is a big problem. I hope the new arrangement will work well. She is our friend, and has based her new régime on British lines but she is likely to become a serious trade rival.

JANUARY 7TH, 1922.—The P.M. cabled urging me to go to Cannes, where I arrived this morning. Found L. G. at the golf club. He gave me a warm reception and congratulated me on what he called my "American victories." He said he wished

to have a chat with me about the election. Later I told him my views. I said the country was against an election. Things were bad. An election would disturb trade. Everyone was busy scratching for a living. There was no question on which the country was anxious to express an opinion. The Coalition would no doubt return with a reduced majority, but L. G.'s reputation would suffer, as people would say that the election was a piece of political gerrymandering. I said, "You will suffer now and in history."

With his usual skill L. G. described a clever sermon he had heard at the Scottish Presbyterian Church. The minister preached on Balaam, whom he described as a great man, but pointed out that the cause of his downfall was selfishness and not the donkey. He was always thinking of himself. Very different from St. Paul, who did not think of himself but of the people around him.

The P.M. remarked, "This sermon goes home to one." I replied, "Burns was equally good when he wrote :

*If self the wavering balance shake  
It's rarely right adjusted."*

The P.M. : Yes, that puts the point.

Grigg remarked to me, "That sermon has eaten in ! It is curious how a few stray words will alter history."

R. : It is strange that old Brougham<sup>1</sup> ended up here. That is a remarkable Latin inscription he put over his door. It is there still.

Grigg : Yes.

He then went on to translate it :

*"I am home from sea at last  
Fortune and hope farewell  
You have tricked me long enough—  
Find other fools to sell."*

L. G. told me that Briand and Bonomi, the Italian Prime Minister, were coming to lunch at the golf club, and that he

<sup>1</sup>Lord Brougham, the famous Lord Chancellor and law reformer ; d. at Cannes 1868.

intended to take them out to play golf. In due course the event happened and created a tremendous sensation. Neither Briand nor Bonomi had ever touched a golf club, and their efforts were of course quaint. All the party roared with laughter, but poor Briand was digging his own grave. L. G. was jubilant over his experiment, and said it would help to relieve the tension. In fact, on the round he had one or two little political chats with Briand and his entourage. L. G.'s object was to create good feeling, he having had quite a row with Briand on the first day of the Conference regarding an interview which Briand had given to a Belgian paper. I thought the golf experiment a great mistake, and that it would be misunderstood and tortured by the Press. France is much concerned about the position, and the incident had the appearance of a music-hall farce. Things turned out as I believed they would. Briand's position in France was very shaky, and the golf match—so-called—helped to do the trick. He made a caustic remark when I drove a fairly good ball. He laughingly said, "He hits the ball as far as he sends the false news!" The others present did not understand that he was referring to the rumpus at Washington about French naval proposals. However, he and I enjoyed the joke.

During the following days many chats with Worthington-Evans. Years ago he and I were fellow-members of the Law Students' Debating Society. He is shrewd and capable—a good example of a clever city solicitor. He is a strong party man and eager for an election because he thinks that unless one takes place soon the split in the Conservative Party will develop. I told him my views, with which in a measure he agreed.

CANNES, 12TH.—On Thursday morning I went to the Villa Valetta, where L. G. is staying. Briand arrived. Curzon was there already—also Grigg and Vansittart. L. G. came downstairs very cheery, and the delegates went into conference, leaving Sylvester, Vansittart and myself sitting by the fire in the hall. After preliminary courtesies with the parrot, whose cage was in the Conference room—a sagacious and amusing bird—L. G., Briand & Co. settled down to business, the purpose being to settle an *aide mémoire* drawn up by L. G. and Grigg epitomising the statement made by L. G. to Briand at their first meeting at Cannes on the previous Friday. This

was to have been issued to the Press and had been given to me for the purpose. I told La Bassée, the Havas representative, that I was about to issue it. In a few minutes, Briand, accompanied by Loucheur, came to me in the hall of the Carlton Hotel in an excited state, begging me not to issue the document until he had seen it. I agreed, and arranged for Grigg to let Briand have the document immediately, which he did. Briand objected to certain phrases, and in particular to the reference to Tangier without further explanation. The result was that the issue was postponed in order that Briand might confer with L. G. on the following morning. Hence the interview at the Villa Valetta. After prolonged discussion, in the course of which changes were made in the document, L. G. came out of the room and made the dramatic announcement that Briand was returning to Paris to interview his Cabinet and face the Chamber. "His Breton blood is up," said L. G. "He is full of beans and says he will be back here on Friday afternoon with full authority to act. He also intends to issue an *aide mémoire* of his statement to me on Friday last. It is now being prepared and will be handed to the Press either to-day or to-morrow."

When L. G. first said that Briand was returning to Paris, Vansittart, Sylvester and I thought he was joking, but soon ascertained that he meant what he said. L. G. remarked, "Briand is like myself. When in doubt what to do, he is depressed and miserable. But when he has made up his mind, he is full of confidence and determination. That is the Celtic character. When I am uncertain how to act in a crisis, I am depressed beyond words, but as soon as I am determined upon a course of action this all goes, and I am ready for the fight. Briand is the same, he tells me."

It transpired that Briand had received that morning a telegram from Millerand criticising the proposals in reference to Genoa, reparations and the proposed Anglo-French guarantee. Briand's prognostications, however, were not verified. He did not return, and on the following day when Rathenau, the German,<sup>1</sup> was actually on his legs in the Conference, a

<sup>1</sup> Walther Rathenau, the German Foreign Minister, who at this Conference succeeded in obtaining an important modification of the London Reparation demands. He was assassinated in June 1922.

message arrived stating that Briand had resigned. The news soon spread round the council chamber, and L. G., who was in the chair, adjourned the Conference for tea. When he came out he said, "The soot is in the soup! You know what that means. It is a Welsh phrase to indicate a sudden and unexpected happening. The soot suddenly falls down the chimney into the soup." Then he repeated the phrase in Welsh. L. G. said, "We shall finish with Rathenau and then we shall go home this evening." This we did, starting at 7 o'clock and arriving at Paris at 2.30 on Saturday.

Later Poincaré, Briand's successor, called on L. G. at the British Embassy, etiquette forbidding that L. G. should call on Poincaré until he had actually been installed as Prime Minister. The appointment was made by telegram from Poincaré delivered to L. G. on the train. Briand met L. G. at the station.

On L. G.'s return from the interview with Poincaré, I saw him. The interview lasted about an hour and a half. He said, "Poincaré is foolish!" He repeated this two or three times, most emphatically. "He actually proposed that there should be a military convention between Great Britain and France, defining the size of the respective armies and other military details. I told him plainly that our people would never agree to anything of the sort, and that if this were insisted upon, our offer of the guarantee would be withdrawn. He also talked in a foolish way about reparations. He said in effect that he did not believe in conferences and that reparations questions should be settled by the Commission. He did not seem to know that they had no power to distribute the money received in the event of the full payments not being made. Nor did he seem to appreciate the impossibility of arriving at an agreement about a matter of this sort by despatches and correspondence. Generally speaking, the interview was most unsatisfactory. Nothing was settled and I really don't know where he is—and wonder whether he knows!"

25TH.—Dined with Jack Seely at the Athenæum to meet some Frenchmen. A motley party—Lord Grey, Winston, Clynes and several Wee Frees.

Interesting talk with Clynes, who said that the great



difficulty of the Labour Party was to get suitable candidates—men who understood industrial conditions, were fairly well educated and able to speak. He said the Labour Party expected to get 150 seats at the forthcoming election, if the Coalition stick together—if not, 200. He volunteered that he had learned more when young by writing a weekly article for a local paper than by any other means. The work made him accurate and taught him how to think things out and how to express himself in a terse way.

28TH AND 29TH (SATURDAY AND SUNDAY).—Played golf with L. G. at Beaconsfield. Then with him to Chequers. Had some remarkable talk with him on Saturday evening and after dinner on Sunday.

He referred bitterly to a newspaper article in which it was stated that we want a more austere, high-minded Prime Minister—a man who stays at home and who does not gad about Europe in *trains de luxe* with golf clubs, etc..

L. G. : I live an austere life. I do little else but work. I don't play cards. I don't go out at night. I don't dance—in fact, practically the whole of my life is spent in my work. I may do well or I may not, but no one can charge me with neglecting my work. I have told Chamberlain and Bonar Law that I am quite willing to resign. In fact I should prefer to do so. But they draw back. They are afraid to tackle the job. They say "You have a European reputation. The statesmen on the Continent know you—perhaps they are a bit afraid of you. You are acquainted with the details of the intricate negotiations." That is true. I am like a lawyer who has been in a case from the beginning. I know all about it. If you bring in a new man he has to pick up the threads.

R. : Yes, and in this case the threads mean geography, treaties, fresh alignment, political personages, past conversations, etc..

L. G. : Very true. But I still feel that I should like to resign. If I could get Dawson to say that I must, then I would. He says that I want to take care of myself, but will not give me a clean bad bill of health. And to be honest, I don't feel in any way unable to do my work. I feel better than I did six months ago. I don't really want an election. When I returned

from Cannes I told Chamberlain that my mind was in a state of suspense. I should like to retire and write a book. I have been offered £1 a word for 80,000 words. That is a lot of money. It would make my position secure.

We talked of the prospects of the election.

L. G. : I put Labour down at 180, and the Wee Frees at 100. That would give 280 out of 617, which I think will be the membership of the House of Commons, after striking off the Irish Vote except Ulster. Fifty-seven would be a very narrow majority. The truth is that the position turns on the Conservatives.

R. : A good deal might depend on Balfour. If on his return he made a speech deprecating party divisions, pointing out their disastrous effect upon the policies in which the Conservatives are interested, and advising them to coalesce and follow you, that would have a great effect.

L. G. : Balfour might, however, like to be Premier himself. It is not likely, but he might. I should not oppose him. I should support him. The same applies to Bonar Law, but as I said he is not keen on the job. I doubt whether his health is really good. He plays tennis, but the other day he played nine holes of golf with me and was very tired. I have been tired on a similar occasion, but after a long period of work, not after a long holiday. I agree about Balfour. If he took up a strong line, he might bring the party together under my leadership. I said just now that I would support Bonar Law or Balfour. I would also support Chamberlain. But of course the Government would have to adopt my policy for the appeasement of Europe. That I regard as the chief objective. The situation is very difficult. There are all sorts of troubles. For example, just now Curzon has telephoned saying that he has a message from Poincaré which leads him (Curzon) to desire to postpone the Angora conference. He has lost his nerve. He is tired out. He does an enormous amount of work—you have no idea of the amount he has to do. Then there are troubles elsewhere—troubles in Egypt and so on.

We then returned to the discussion of the course he should take. Ultimately he said, "Well I think the best course is to wait until Parliament meets. Then we shall see the real

attitude of the Conservatives. If they want me to go on, I will. If they don't, I shall retire and write my book."

We then talked of Egypt. I said, "Why is Allenby resigning? Is he for the Egyptians or against them?"

L. G. : Now he is for them.

[I have omitted to state that L. G. said that he had seen Burnham, who agreed that there ought to be an election in May. He (L. G.) had, however, said to Burnham that if trade improves he thought it would be well for the Government to go on. "Why," said he, "should we not after having gone all through this trouble and obloquy, derive any credit there is to be got from improvement in trade due in some measure, at any rate, to our administration?"]

He spoke strongly about Lord Grey, whose attack on his policy he bitterly resented.

L. G. : Grey lays himself open to a serious indictment. He was responsible for losing our old friends, Turkey, Bulgaria and Greece. The Greeks offered to put 300,000 men into the war. For some reason Grey would not agree. The result was that the Greek King took sides against us. I begged Grey to go to Turkey and Bulgaria and endeavour to make friends with them. He declined. He said, "I have too much to do in the office. I cannot leave." What was there to do in the office that was of equal importance? I think I must point this out. I can make an overwhelming case against him.

R. : I doubt whether the public are interested in personal disputes. It is a question of policy. He is proposing a restrictive policy and it is *ad hoc* to indicate its weakness in the past.

L. G. : Yes, I agree with you. I think I shall say, "Here is a doctor in charge of a hospital. Another doctor who was formerly in charge of it comes along and wants to resume his position. In order to get it he criticises the treatment of the doctor now in charge. This doctor is quite entitled to point out that all the patients treated by his predecessor are dead!"

My Cannes visit, strangely enough, has been a success. French journalists for the first time attended my meetings in large numbers. On Briand's fall, some of the French papers came out with the amusing announcement that M. Poincaré ought to provide himself with a French Lord R. [The French

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## THE PEACE CONFERENCE AND AFTER

don't do badly in this line as it is. They are past masters in the art of political publicity.] This led *The Times* to pay me the compliment of saying that at Cannes the seal had been set on a great reputation already established, etc.. A great compliment. Whether deserved or not, it gave me pleasure and satisfaction.

## Chapter XLII

*L. G. offers to make way for Bonar Law or Chamberlain—His two conditions—Teachers and the Geddes "Axe"—Philip Snowden warns L. G. against the Bolsheviks—Mrs. Snowden's interview with Lenin—L. G.'s opinion of Poincaré—His approach to the Conservative leaders.*

FEBRUARY 3RD, 1922.—Lunched with Winston. He says he is very busy and that the Prime Minister has put an enormous amount of work on his shoulders. He likes the work.

He says the Irish situation is very awkward. He intends to propose arbitration regarding the boundary question, as he thinks this the only way out. He added, "Everyone in Ireland seems to be unreasonable. The Irish will not recognise that they, like every other civilised people, must adopt reasonable methods for settling differences."

He told me that he had been in favour of an election in February and thought that L. G. had missed his market. I said I understood that L. G. had offered to resign in favour of Chamberlain and had offered to support him, but that the latter had declined the proposal.

Winston answered, "You may be right, but I was unaware of it."

EARLY FEBRUARY.—Several interviews with the Duke of Atholl, the Lord Chamberlain, regarding the Press arrangements for Princess Mary's wedding. I said, laughing, "Don't forget to give some tickets to Chairmen of Chambers of Commerce and Trade Union leaders." If adopted, this innovation will make Queen Victoria turn in her grave. The Duke is a pleasant man to do business with.

11TH.—To Trent Park to golf with L. G., Sassoon, etc.. When I arrived I found Inverforth, who proposed that I should take the Chairmanship of the *Daily Chronicle*, in which he is a large shareholder.

Perris, the acting-editor of the *Chronicle*, saw me two or

three days ago and made a similar suggestion on his own account, assuring me of the loyal support of the whole staff. He says the *Chronicle* is now doing 800,000 a day. I declined the proposal for various reasons.

12TH (SUNDAY).—On Sunday motored to Chequers, arriving in the afternoon. Had a long talk with L. G.. Very interesting. This is what he said: "My position is quite plain. I don't care whether I go or not. In fact I would rather be out of it. Yesterday, when we were playing golf, I thought, 'Why should I be weighed down by all these cares? I have had five years of strenuous life, and hardly a minute to myself. I have been in office for sixteen years. Why should I not have a little peace and quietude? Why should I not have an opportunity of enjoying the glorious sunshine without feeling that I am snatching two or three hours which might be employed in my work?' I have told Chamberlain and Bonar Law that I am willing to give up and support either of them, provided he carries out my policy on two points: (1) gives effect to the Irish settlement; and (2) gives effect to my policy for the pacification of Europe. Chamberlain is not prepared to accept the responsibility. Bonar Law is a strange fellow. The other night Birkenhead, Chamberlain and I, with others, met him at dinner at Beaverbrook's. I had had a terrible day—deputation after deputation—a Cabinet Meeting, and a speech in the House of Commons—going full tilt all the time and full of cares and worries. Bonar Law greeted me with something of this sort, 'Well, things were bad in my time, but they are much worse now. You are faced with troubles on every hand and how you are going to pull through, I don't know!' That was a nice way to greet people who had been working like slaves all day and were fully conscious of their difficulties. I said to Birkenhead, 'If the positions of Bonar Law and myself had been reversed, I should have tried to cheer him up. This might have involved saying something that was not quite true, but a lie of that sort will be excused.' Birkenhead agreed with me."

R. : Did Bonar show any disposition to take the Premiership himself?

L. G. : It was interesting to see him. He kept taking up the

crown and trying it on his head, and then, when he felt it was a crown of thorns, he put it down again. And then he took it up again.

R. : A great deal will depend upon Arthur Balfour. If, when he returns, he says to the Conservative Party, " Unless you stand together you are going to smash the things you regard as vital. Close your ranks and follow your leaders," that will have a great effect.

L. G. : It will be interesting to know what line he is going to take. He may wish to become Prime Minister. If he does, I shall support him. I am in agreement with Birkenhead and Chamberlain. They wanted me to see A. J. B. and endeavour to secure his support, but I declined. I shall do nothing to influence him. He must do just as he thinks best. Dawson is coming here this afternoon. He is going to have a look over me. I don't feel ill, but I should like a holiday.

Dawson arrived after tea. In response to his enquiry as to how L. G. felt, the latter said, " Fairly well, considering the number of vultures there are after me. No man ever had as many vultures after him as I have."

Dawson stayed to dinner, but there was no medical conference until just before he expressed his intention of leaving, somewhere about 10 o'clock. L. G. and he then retired into the small library. When they reappeared Dawson announced that he thought L. G. sound in wind and limb. L. G. laughed, saying, " I can write home like Mr. Gladstone, ' He won't condemn me.' Mr. G. was full of secret satisfaction that his health did not warrant resignation."

[Yesterday I had an illuminating conversation with Worthington-Evans, whose attitude towards L. G. has evidently changed. Obviously he is groping about for another leader, but cannot see one. He said, however, that if A. J. B. would take the position, the Party would rally round him to a man. He doubted whether he would.]

18TH.—To Chequers to lunch. L. G. and I were to have played golf in the afternoon, but he went to sleep instead. He said he had had a tremendous week.

I had to go to London, but returned to Chequers on Sunday afternoon. When I arrived, L. G. met me at the door

with Geddes and Horne. He took them out for a walk, and afterwards had a long private discussion on the Geddes Report. Meanwhile Mr. and Mrs. Philip Snowden<sup>1</sup> arrived—very nice people. Snowden asked L. G. what he thought of the Labour victory at Manchester. L. G. said he had expected it and that he anticipated others. He asked Snowden to what he ascribed the Labour success. Snowden replied, "To the threat in the Geddes Report to interfere with education. All the schoolmasters and schoolmistresses have been working like blacks for the Labour man, and the people were much annoyed at the proposal to exclude children from the schools until they were six years old."

L. G. (looking at Geddes and Horne) : That is just what I have been telling you. Your educational proposals may appeal to the upper classes, but they do not appeal to the people, and Riddell is a violent antagonist.

R. : I strongly object to the teachers' salaries being cut down. They are not overpaid. Teaching is a hard job. Everything depends on it. If you cut down the teachers' salaries, the result will be to turn them into Bolsheviks. The salaries may have been raised, but a man always resents having his salary reduced. I look upon adequate payment for teachers as an insurance, as well as an act of justice.

Horne expressed himself strongly in favour of carrying out the report, saying, "Why should school teachers have a higher rate of pay than country parsons or country lawyers?"

R. : There is the cynical reason that if you do not pay them properly they can do more harm. If you don't take care, you will have the next generation educated by disgruntled people who will inculcate ideas prejudicial to the stability of the country.

Horne looked at Geddes sorrowfully, but made no further reply.

During and after dinner, there was much talk between Snowden and L. G.. Snowden, much to my surprise, warned L. G. against the danger of meeting Lenin and the Bolsheviks at the forthcoming Genoa Conference. He said, "These people are fanatics. Lenin has written a book in which he says

<sup>1</sup>Now Viscount and Viscountess Snowden.



that the Soviet Government may have to make terms temporarily with the capitalists, but that the new position must be treated as a jumping-off ground for a new attack on capitalism." It is the essence of the Bolshevist creed that the movement must be international, and Snowden does not believe that the Bolsheviks, being fanatics, will be diverted from their purpose. They will endeavour to get over their present difficulties by securing assistance from other countries, but will return to the attack at the earliest opportunity. The end being justified in their opinion, they will have no scruples about going back on their promises. In other words, they are not to be trusted. They are out to win by any means available.

I told L. G. that I had heard the same thing in America, and Mrs. Snowden gave a graphic account of an interview she had with Lenin. She asked him, "What course do you take with the peasants who have property?" He said, "Oh, we deal with them quite easily. We stir up against them peasants who have no property, and then (laughing heartily) you don't have much more trouble with the property-possessing peasants. They are very soon murdered."

"It was most revolting," said Mrs. Snowden, "to hear him saying this and laughing heartily at the same time."

This talk seemed to surprise and somewhat depress L. G., who is bent on meeting the Russians at Genoa. Mrs. Snowden said, "You will find they will put forward all sorts of impossible proposals. They are now busy drawing them up. They are getting out a bill of costs against the Allies as a counterblast to the Allied claims for their pre-war loans. I believe the total will be enormous and far exceed the Allied claims."

L. G. (looking much disgusted) : Well, if they are going to act in that way, we shall not confer with them. We shall have to confine ourselves to conferences with the French, Germans, Italians, etc.. We shall have to try to settle reparations and other similar matters. The Russians have acted very foolishly. They have declined all reasonable proposals for a settlement. Their first mistake was to decline the Prinkipo suggestion.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This was a proposal made by President Wilson in January 1919 that representatives of all the Russian groups, including the Bolsheviks, should meet

Snowden here said, "You are dealing with unreasonable people—pure theorists and, don't forget, *fanatics*. Most of them are not clever men and in the Trade Union movement we should be sorry to appoint them as leaders. They are far below the average of our people. So what can you expect?"

21ST.—Long talk with Commander Chilcott, Birkenhead's quondam ally—but apparently they are not so friendly as they were. He said there had been a conspiracy against the Prime Minister and that all the details were set forth in letters he had in his possession.

25TH.—To Lympe, arriving about 5 o'clock. L. G. came back at about 8 o'clock from Boulogne, where he had been meeting Poincaré—their second meeting. L. G. looked very tired, as well he might, having started from Lympe early in the morning. He went to Calais and motored from there to Boulogne in a ramshackle car provided by the French Government. He gave an amusing account of the journey. At one point the car stopped. The driver said it wanted oil, which he proceeded to administer in large quantities. On resuming his seat, the machinery simply went round and round and would not bite, whereupon he got out of the car and seizing several handfuls of dust proceeded to mix it with the oil. The results were satisfactory, which showed, as I remarked, that even mud has its virtues.

I asked L. G. whether the interview had been satisfactory. He said, "Well, we got all we wanted. I considered my plan of action most carefully, and at the outset made a violent frontal attack. I told Poincaré that France must decide on her course of action. Great Britain had two million unemployed and must take steps to resuscitate her trade. Admittedly France's position was different, but France must not be selfish. She must be prepared to support the country which had done so much for her. If France was not willing to attend the Genoa Conference, then she must expect to find herself isolated. Britain, Italy, Japan, Belgium and Germany would have to join hands in conference. France could not expect to dominate the policy

on the Island of Prinkipo, in the Sea of Marmora, to discuss their differences under the auspices of the Allies. The proposal was dropped owing to the opposition of the anti-Bolshevik groups.

of the Allies in reference to her particular needs. She must take part in the attempt to rehabilitate Europe. Poincaré did not dispute this." He went on to say that Poincaré had agreed to attend the Conference, but made stipulations as to the recognition of the Russian Government, Allied debts, and other matters which had already been settled at Cannes in accordance with the French view. The question of the Anglo-French pact was not even mentioned. Evidently L. G. had not relished the interview. He said, "I did not look forward to it. Had I been going to meet Clemenceau, Millerand or Briand I should have anticipated the meeting with pleasure. They are more formidable gladiators than Poincaré, but they appeal to me. He does not. However, all went well and, when he left the Conference, he was quite honest in the version he gave of it to his fellow-countrymen. He is not like Briand. He does not try to put a gloss on what transpired with a view to his own advantage."

We talked much about Russia. L. G. admitted that he doubted whether it would be possible to do much with the Russians at the Conference. He thought the indications were that they intended to act unreasonably.

On Sunday he remained in bed until lunch-time. He seemed very preoccupied. After lunch we had some music. While this was going forward, L. G. went to the writing-table, obtained a bundle of notepaper and sat down by the fire busily writing in pencil. He covered sheet after sheet, notwithstanding the music. Later in the evening he sent for me to go to his bedroom and then handed me the result of his labours to read. His notes had been transcribed by Miss Stevenson. They consisted of a long letter to Chamberlain stating that L. G. views the present political situation with alarm. He thinks that in the interests of the country and those of Europe it would be a calamity if the House of Commons were split into a number of sections. What England and the world needs is a strong homogeneous Government in Great Britain. Unless she has such a Government she cannot continue to perform the services to humanity that she is now performing. He outlined what had been done by the Government and what they were hoping to do. He said that he had already offered

Chamberlain and Bonar Law to retire in favour of either of them and to give his successor his support. He now repeated the offer and strongly urged that it should be accepted. He asked my opinion on the letter. I said I thought he was taking the right course but that the form of the letter required some alteration. In parts it looked rather too much like a series of excuses and an election address.

He replied, "Of course this is only the first draft, and no doubt some change will be necessary. But the main point is, do you think I am taking the right course?"

I again told him I thought he was. If Chamberlain or Bonar Law accepted his proposal, well and good. If not, then he, L. G., could reply that if he were going on, it would be necessary that he should have united support.

On Monday morning we had some more talk about the letter and when I left Lympne L. G. was dictating the draft to Sylvester.

Much talk over the week-end about Lord Harcourt's<sup>1</sup> tragic death. He was found dead in bed.

28TH.—To the Abbey for Princess Mary's wedding. For some time I stood inside the doorway watching the Ministers and others coming in. When L. G. arrived, he came up to me and said, "The Dean, I believe? Many thanks for allowing us to use your Abbey!" I said, "I hope you will make proper use of it." The wedding was a great pageant. The women's dresses were completely overshadowed by the brilliance of the men's uniforms, which displayed enough gold lace to pay off the national debt.

<sup>1</sup>The Rt. Hon. Viscount Harcourt, Secretary for the Colonies, 1910-15; First Commissioner of Works, 1905-10 and 1915-17

## Chapter XLIII

*The political crisis in full blast—More talk of a new party—L. G. on House of Lords reform—He begins to prepare a new hymn-book—The Genoa Conference—L. G.'s impressions of the Russians—Bonar Law now eager for power.*

MARCH 2ND, 1922.—To Coombe Hill with L. G. and Grigg. We found Guest waiting for us.

The political crisis in full blast. L. G. evidently very tired, but he played golf better than for some months, holing putts all over the place and driving longer than usual. I have noticed, however, that men who are strung up to a pitch of excitement owing to political or business worries often out-shine themselves at golf. The nervous system seems to be preternaturally active, the sight extraordinarily good, and the powers of concentration abnormal.

As I have remarked before, when all is said, L. G. does not worry a great deal about his work. Like the lawyer, he does his best and takes the rough with the smooth. Every international or domestic complication is a case to him, full of interest. What really worries him is a political crisis. It is the same now. Obviously he is much perturbed. He said, as we were driving to Coombe, "I should like to be out of it, but I am not going to have it said that I am deserting the ship in a gale. If they want me to go on, and are prepared to give me unqualified loyal support, I will do so."

I said, "The leaders have expressed themselves on several occasions—Chamberlain, Birkenhead and, to a less extent, Bonar Law. As I have said before, much will depend on A. J. B.. If he comes out whole-heartedly in favour of the Coalition or a National Party, and warns the Conservatives of the dangers of disruption, that will do more than anything to bring about cohesion."

L. G. : I quite agree with that. But the matter goes deeper. Not only have I to carry the leaders with me but we must

stop the dry rot that is taking place in the constituencies. Younger<sup>1</sup> acted badly, and no doubt, during my absence at Cannes, Chamberlain failed to control him. I have not yet made up my mind what to do, but feel I must have a holiday. That is essential.

He had a long talk with Guest on the links, and from what Guest said to me, it is obvious that he and those working with him still hanker for the name "Liberal" and are still dominated by traditional differences.

4TH.—I received a message asking me to go to Chequers. I arrived with McCurdy, the Whip, whom I drove down, at about 7.30.

L. G. far brighter than I have seen him for some time. Whether this was due to Chamberlain's speech or to over-excitement, I don't know. Mrs. L. G. said L. G. had been out far too much. He had been to too many dinners, owing to the crisis. He had been too late to bed and this had done him no good. However, he was most amusing and argumentative. For example, McCurdy raised the question of the reform of the House of Lords. This caused L. G. to make a clever little speech showing the difficulties. He said, "If you make a strong elective body, then there may be a fight between it and the House of Commons for supremacy. On the other hand, if you form a body out of representatives of County Councils, Universities, etc., this will in reality be a Soviet Government. That is the whole principle of Sovietism—the election of representatives by different bodies, and you may be sure that the Trade Unions will not be behindhand in claiming the right to appoint representatives. They will say, and it will be difficult to refute their arguments, that they have as much right to appoint a representative as the University of Oxford. The truth is that if the House of Lords is not unduly obstructive, it is not a bad second chamber." I told L. G. that Buckmaster had said to me the other night that it would be a good idea to limit the legislative part of the House to those Peers who attended a certain number of times during the year. L. G. said he did not agree as this

<sup>1</sup> Later Viscount Younger; Chairman, Unionist Party Organisation, 1916-23; d. 1929.

would lead the back-benchers, who never attend and who take no intelligent interest in the proceedings, to make a point of attending. He added, "This would be a step in the wrong direction, but I am not satisfied with the Parliament Act, and think there is much to be said in favour of a joint meeting of the two Houses to discuss any measure as to which there is material difference. Such an event would not happen often, and I think such a scheme might be a solution."

After dinner, L. G. took McCurdy and me upstairs into the Long Gallery, saying he wished to have a political talk. He began by saying that he had read McCurdy's memorandum, which he thought very good. He agreed that three courses were open—(1) resignation, (2) the formation of a National or Centre Party, and (3) to continue on the faith of assurances by the leaders of the Conservative Party. Then he said, "Now, Riddell, what is your view?"

R. : I doubt whether it will be possible for you to continue under existing conditions, notwithstanding the assurances received from Chamberlain and the others. Fresh troubles are certain to develop. At present you reign, but don't rule. You are the ostensible leader, but in reality lead only one party—the Coalition Liberals. The main section of your supporters is led by someone else, who always has it in his power to veto your policy. You will not get into smooth water until you have a central or national party of which you are the real head. The present arrangements give too much scope for dissension. But the attempt to form such a party would be an experiment which might fail. It might lead to the disruption of both parties without bringing about the formation of a new party. On the other hand, if you don't object to giving up office, then it would be best to take the plunge and resign. If you go on under existing conditions, that is if you adopt No. 3, I think your health is bound to suffer. Transacting the national business does not really affect you, but if, added to this, you have to cope with internal worries—if you have always to be on the look-out for attack, if you are continually being assailed—then I doubt if you could stand it.

L. G. : There is a great deal in what you say. The two

parties are like two businesses, not combined, but more or less under the same management. The result is that the management of neither business will confide in the other. Each is bent on keeping up its separate organisation and neither will give away its trade secrets.

R. : Too much domestic patriotism.

McC. : You must bear in mind that the chief difficulty is likely to arise with the Coalition Liberals. The Conservatives want a leader. You are the only one available. They have no real alternative. But the Coalition Liberals are in a different position. Unless you are careful, you will find that many of them will transfer their allegiance to the Wee Frees. Many of them do not like co-operating with the Conservatives.

R. : What about Liberals like Macnamara, Kellaway, etc. ?

L. G. : Macnamara and Kellaway are both strongly in favour of fusion. I was rather astonished. But Mond, to my surprise, is against it. We had a meeting the other night. The question is the course of action. I feel I must have a holiday and am going to take one immediately. To-morrow night I shall see Balfour. I think the best plan will be for him to outline the policy in his speech on Tuesday. That will open the ball, and if he says what I think he will say, it should have a great effect. But I foresee difficulties in the formation of a new party.

McC. : If the leaders come to an agreement, then there should be a period of delay. Indeed I am not sure whether the next election should not be fought on the lines of keeping the two parties on foot.

R. : You could not keep a thing of that sort secret. It would be certain to leak out.

L. G. : Yes, it would be impossible to keep such an arrangement secret. I should not mind going into opposition with Chamberlain & Co.. However, we shall see what happens to-morrow night.

McC. : Winston made a speech to-day advocating a National Party.

L. G. : Yes, he is strongly in favour of it. And so is Birkenhead.

5TH (SUNDAY).—We went for a walk—L. G., McCurdy



and I. Much more talk about the political situation. L. G. went to London at 3 o'clock, to attend the Party dinner.

7TH.—On going to Downing Street found L. G. seated with his feet up. He had been in bed on the Monday with a bad cold. He is going to Criccieth on Thursday.

He said it was impossible to keep anything secret. It had been agreed at the dinner on Sunday night that letters should be written to Younger and McCurdy, and it had been agreed that these should be kept secret. The information, however, appeared in the Press on Monday morning and must have been given away by someone present at the dinner.

By the way, L. G. is keen on the compilation of a hymn-book to contain all the best hymns. He has been talking about this for some time, and now proposes that Dr. Terry, organist at Westminster Cathedral; Sir Henry Hadow, Vice Chancellor of Sheffield University—a great authority on music—and Dr. Walford Davies, shall go to Criccieth for the purpose of going through and selecting hymns. L. G. said, "I want a holiday but must have something to do, otherwise I should be miserable. We shall try over a lot of hymns in the presence of an audience. They want to do this in the local church, but I prefer a chapel."

R. : How about the organ ?

Mrs. L. G. : There is only one organ in Criccieth—viz. that at the church. The chapels have American organs only.

L. G. : Well, I suppose we shall have to go to the church.

23RD.—To Criccieth, where I arrived at midday on Friday, returning on Monday with the P.M. and others—a pleasant time. Hadow, Terry and Walford Davies arrived on Saturday. McCurdy arrived on Friday afternoon, and left early on Saturday morning.

I found the P.M. looking much better, and he said he was much better. He walked with great vigour and insisted on scrambling over walls and hedges and in making his way along the river bank across a difficult and perplexing country, with the result that he, Hadow and I all suffered casualties in the way of scratches, etc..

Much talk with the P.M. about the political situation, which has been further complicated by Winston's attitude

towards the Bolsheviks. He declines to agree to the political recognition of the Soviet, and may resign if L. G. insists. This might bring about a complete smash-up of the Government. L. G. had a long talk with McCurdy. He was to speak to Winston at Northampton on the Saturday. L. G. carefully instructed McCurdy what to say, and J. T. Davies was busy telephoning to London to secure that Winston should not commit himself in his speech on Saturday.

Speaking of the general situation, L. G. said, "The truth is that I am in a state of indifference. I don't really care what happens. It would suit me to resign. I want a holiday and I want to write my book, but the still small voice warns me against running away in a time of stress and difficulty. Furthermore, I don't like being 'beat.' However, I am going back on Monday, and shall see my colleagues."

I told L. G. that I had met Chamberlain, who had said, "Things are better. We shall pull through all right. I am getting letters from the great industrial centres urging us to remain united. They realise that disintegration means Labour victories. Tell the Prime Minister that. He will get his health back again. He is a great man, and great men have a way of pulling themselves together."

L. G. spent most of his time trying over hymns with Hadow, Davies and Terry. They meditate a new hymn-book containing the three hundred best hymns. The musical experts had prepared lists and there was much discussion as to the inclusion or exclusion of various hymns, with interludes of trying them over on the piano—L. G. taking an active part, particularly in regard to the Welsh hymns. The experts were evidently much surprised to see him sing with such vigour. I asked them privately whether he really understood much about it. They said he had a good natural ear and quite good judgment, although his taste naturally tended in favour of the Welsh style of hymn. On Sunday there was a great recital at the church—Walford Davies conducting. Very interesting.

We came back on the Monday by special train, and L. G. at once plunged into the political maelstrom. The form of the Genoa resolution was settled, and, so far as could be gathered, Winston was appeased and the Cabinet's unity maintained.

It is quite clear to me that L. G. means to hold on as long as he can. He does not mean to resign or to ride for a fall. But all his hopes are concentrated on Genoa. He looks to the Conference to restore his star to the zenith. He told me that he believed that Lenin and Co. had seen the error of their ways, and were anxious to approximate to normal economic methods. He doubts if Lenin will go to the Conference. He thinks he will be afraid to leave Trotsky behind. I said I did not agree that the Bolsheviks had changed their views, and that, being fanatics, they would not be likely to change. Their object is to obtain assistance, and, having obtained it, they will continue their propaganda. In short, they are still out to smash the capitalistic system.

L. G. talked much of the appeasement of Europe. He said that the Bolsheviks were threatening the Rumanians, Poles and Bulgarians, and that these countries were meditating an attack upon the Bolsheviks. At Genoa he hopes to secure a treaty of peace. L. G.'s Greek policy has proved a disastrous failure, but he did not refer to it, and I did not bring the subject up.

APRIL 4TH.—Long talk with Commander Chilcott, who told me that the Lord Chancellor has gone away for a month's holiday. Chilcott says that Birkenhead's doctor has put the fear of God into his patient.

6TH.—Lunched with L. G.. He is anxious for me to go to Genoa, but I am not going, as the newspapers are divided in opinion about the Conference. Personally I do not believe in it and fear it will be a failure.

MID APRIL AND EARLY MAY.—Long talks with Hamar Greenwood. He said that he had not been responsible for the reprisals in Ireland. On many occasions instructions had been given behind his back, but of course he had had to bear the blame. As a matter of fact, he did not agree with reprisals. He had been for resolutely enforcing the law, but for some reason martial law was not favoured. He did his part although it was not a grateful one. He added that Winston is "fed up" with Ireland.

I met Alfred Mond, who told me that L. G. had made the mistake of his life in going to Genoa; that he did not understand foreigners, either their mentality or their language;

that in particular he did not understand Orientals ; that he was dealing with people who were past-masters in the arts of trickery ; that L. G. had never had to deal with such people before, and that although he, Mond, was not so clever as L. G. he could have done better with the Russians because he knew more about them and their ways. He added, " The whole thing is futile."

MAY 20TH.—To meet the P.M. at Victoria on his return from Genoa. A big crowd on the platform and outside the station. A very hot evening. The Duke of Atholl was there representing the King, and brought a Royal message.

I had a long chat with Austen Chamberlain. The more I see of him, the more I like him. A fine type—patriotic, unselfish, courageous and indifferent to attacks. There is something boyish about him which is attractive. He is kindly and on occasion rather sentimental. Some time ago I heard him propose Arthur Pearson's health at a private dinner. He made one of the most touching speeches I have heard—quite short but very good stuff. I meant to write it down but put off doing so until it was too late to remember exactly what he said.

21ST (SUNDAY).—To Sassoon's at Trent to meet L. G., who had not arrived when I got there at about 1 o'clock. He came about 4. I found Bonar Law, who had been playing tennis. He looks much better and said he has put on two stones in weight. He said he had met several people who had told him they were opposed to L. G.'s policy, but that the unfair attacks on him in the Press had made them determined to support him personally, as a protest. B. L. expressed the gloomiest view about Ireland. He asked, " What does this treaty between De Valera and Collins portend ? It upsets the whole Treaty. What are we going to do ? I wonder what L. G. thinks about it."

I replied that I did not know—not having seen him.

I was much interested in B. L.. It is quite evident that he is hankering for power to enforce his views. Many men who give up a position are, after retirement, more critical of their late colleagues than when in the saddle. I think this is Bonar's state of mind.

On my return from golf, I found L. G. talking with Bonar

Law. He was looking well—better than he did when he went to Genoa, and he said that his health had greatly improved. He ascribed this to the air, and to the fact that he had lived in a place high above the town. He said this was an advantage, as he was thus clear of the intrigues and conversations perpetually in progress, day and night. Bonar repeated to L. G. with a not unnatural spice of cynicism, that, had it not been for newspaper attacks, he, L. G., would not have had such a reception as he received on Saturday. L. G. agreed.

B. L. went off before dinner. L. G. said that as usual he was in a gloomy state. "Things were very bad." L. G. added, "I countered him by saying, 'Yes, Bonar, but they will be very much worse! They are always growing worse!' He did not know what to say to that. His gloom always reacts on me by making me more cheerful!"

I had a long talk with L. G. alone. I asked him about the Russians. He said, "With the exception of Krassin, they are impossible people. Very clever, but entirely concerned in ideas and arguments. They don't seem to have any real desire to achieve anything definite." I said, "In other words, they are not practical? Did you get close up against Chicherin? Did you have a real heart-to-heart talk with him?"

L. G. : No. I found this impossible. I asked him to lunch, because I thought that would enable me to get on closer terms with him, and I took risks in asking him, but it made no difference. He was polite, but always official and diplomatic. He is a product of the Russian diplomatic service and the revolutionary movement and never forgets his old training. He is clever in argument. He knows several languages and can speak with almost equal facility in each. In conversation he speaks just as if he were speaking in a conference. You never get any human touch with him.

R. : In short, you were no closer to him at the end of the Conference than you were at the beginning?

L. G. admitted this was so. L. G. said that on several occasions the Conference was on the point of breaking down, and that he had only prevented this by the exercise of much energy and tact. Poincaré was anxious to break up the Conference, but did not like to send express instructions to that

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## THE PEACE CONFERENCE AND AFTER

effect. Barthou,<sup>1</sup> on the other hand, was averse to breaking it up, and so did not act on the hints received in his instructions ! In fact, the French had not chosen a suitable implement for their purpose.

<sup>1</sup>Louis Barthou, another of the French delegates ; Premier 1913.

## Chapter XLIV

*A visit to Criccieth—Lord Carson on Ireland—President Wilson's wish for "a drawn war"—Sir Henry Wilson's assassination—An election fund offer to L. G.—Death of Lord Northcliffe.*

JUNE 1ST, 1922.—To Criccieth with Mrs. L. G. and her grand-daughter Valerie—a clever, attractive little kid—sharp as a needle, although only four years old. Mrs. L. G. kind and thoughtful for one's comfort, as usual.

2ND.—Opened Golf Course at Criccieth in L. G.'s absence—speechifying and all the rest of it.

3RD.—L. G. and J. T. Davies arrived.

L. G. made a first-class speech at the laying of the foundation stone of the Criccieth Memorial, the funds for which have been got together by Mrs. Lloyd George, some £6,000—quite a feat. His speech was well delivered and not too florid. He travelled by night train, and compounded his speech as he lay out in the garden.

During his speech it was amusing to see his little grand-daughter looking up at him. He said, "She was astonished at my blethering on in this way and wondered what Grandpa was up to!"

Megan arrived from London before the laying of the foundation stone. She had been to Princess Mary's ball, of which she gave an attractive account.

She has her father's power of description, and is a clever little actress and mimic. She gave an amusing imitation of Winston dancing, from which it appeared that he takes it seriously.

CRICCIETH : 4TH (SUNDAY).—The P.M. as usual very keen about preaching. On Sunday morning he spent a considerable time listening to a sermon on Balaam—a character in whom he is much interested. In the afternoon we drove to Festiniog, where he attended a service at which two sermons were preached. It began about 6 and ended about 8.45. The

chapel was like a limekiln. I only put my nose inside. That was enough. Nevertheless, the P.M. was delighted and full of vim when he came to the house of Dr. Evans, father of Mrs. Carey Evans's husband, where we had supper.

While the P.M. was in chapel, I went to Lady Newborough's. She told me some amusing, interesting things about the Newborough family. The fourth Lord Newborough is buried on Bardsey Island, which belongs to the family. Twenty thousand saints are also buried there. The profane say that the old boy, a goey old gentleman, selected Bardsey in the hope that, unnoticed among so many saints, he would be able to scrape into Paradise at the Last Day. Lady Newborough gave me a book about the mystery of the first Lady Newborough, who was said to have been changed at birth—the other changeling being Louis Philippe, who became King of the French.

While at Criccieth we had two pleasant picnics—one in the mountains and one on the sea-shore. At the first Sir Vincent Evans<sup>1</sup> and Sir Henry Jones<sup>2</sup> were present, both charming companions and interesting conversationalists. The P.M. full of a pathetic letter he had received from Llewelyn Williams written on his death-bed, and difficult to decipher. The P.M. spent hours trying to make out the meaning. It was interesting to see him sitting by the bank of the river during one of our picnics earnestly engaged with Sir Vincent in trying to understand what the dead man had meant. The P.M. told us that the first page was missing.

The P.M. pleased me by making complimentary remarks about the articles on public speaking in my little book, *Some Things That Matter*. He said he thought them the best things he had read on the subject.

We had a talk about novels. L. G.'s fancy runs in the direction of historical novels or those dealing with wild life. Just now he is keen on Ridgwell Cullum, and gave a dramatic account of a gentleman in one of Cullum's books who mistook a bear for a lady. Of course the bear crushed him to death.

Before leaving I had a long talk with L. G. about Ireland.

<sup>1</sup>The Welsh antiquary, etc..

<sup>2</sup> Professor of Moral Philosophy, Glasgow University ; d. 1922.



I said the military were making a mistake in issuing *communiqués* making it appear that we were engaged in a war. For instance, one of the *communiqués* said that we had "captured the Pettigo Salient."

L. G. : Yes, absurd !

The P.M. was full of a letter from Henry Wilson dug up by Miss Stevenson in which Wilson, after thanking L. G. profusely for something he had done for him—"another of your many kindnesses"—goes on to say that L. G. did more than any other man to win the war. This would be an awkward pill for Wilson, having regard to his recent criticisms.

I have had a pleasant little holiday. Both Mr. and Mrs. L. G. are admirable hosts. They give one plenty of freedom. Some of the entourage allege that L. G. is less tolerant of criticism than he was. Perhaps they are right. If they are, it is not surprising, considering the position he holds and the adulation showered upon him. It is true that he has rather a tendency to ascribe disagreement, opposition and criticism to some cause extraneous to the matter in hand. He is usually so convinced he is right that he cannot understand any reasonable person differing from him.

11TH (SUNDAY).—Dined with Mr. Crawley to meet Lord Cavan,<sup>1</sup> with whom I had much interesting conversation. I told him what I thought about the military *communiqués*. Evidently he did not much like this, but showed by subsequent remarks that he thought I was right. He said about Ireland :

"Ireland has been allowed to drift into a terrible mess. Had martial law been enforced two years ago, the Sinn Fein revolution could easily have been put down, and there is no doubt that shortly before the Treaty the Sinn Feiners were practically down and out. But I don't say the Treaty was wrong. Indeed I think it was right. Now, whatever we may think we must stand by it. We must do the right thing."

14TH.—Lunched with the P.M. at Downing Street. Present: Beck, American Solicitor-General,<sup>2</sup> Horne and Sidney Brooks, the journalist.

Beck talked much and said some interesting things. Most

<sup>1</sup>Chief of Imperial General Staff, 1922-26.

<sup>2</sup>James Montgomery Beck, U.S. Solicitor-General 1921-25.

of his conversation was about President Wilson, whom he cordially detests, and whom he did his best to crush. The most notable thing he told us was that prior to the Spring of 1918, when the Germans broke through, Wilson's main object had been to bring about a "drawn war." He said most categorically that after America had entered the war, Wilson had had an interview with Taft and another and had said in reply to some observation that he did not wish the British to defeat the Germans as that would not be a good thing for America. Taft took a note of what he said, and this note had been seen by Beck. Beck said to L. G., "If you can get Taft to talk, he will tell you some extraordinary things. He will tell you that Wilson said to him . . ." and then he repeated the above. L. G. said that he could not understand the Americans coming in when they did, not having come in after the sinking of the *Lusitania*. I said the explanation was that America, having called upon Germany to stop her submarine campaign against her ships and Germany having declined to do so in the most formal and categorical way, no self-respecting nation could abstain from coming into the war. If A keeps hitting B on the nose, and B says time after time, "If you do that again I will knock you down," the time comes when B must do as he says or eat his words. Beck said that he did not quite agree with this, and then went on to make a long explanation which really confirmed what I had said. He told us that now Wilson had not got a single friend. All his colleagues and officials—even his private secretary—had parted from him. He was a narrow, self-centred, obstinate man, who for some reason did not like Great Britain. Beck said, "Whatever his motive he certainly did not support her as he might have done." He said that Wilson was a man who could not put in more than a very limited number of hours' work each day. He was not a good administrator, but he admitted that he came to clear, definite decisions. Brooks put up a fight for Wilson's administration prior to the war, and gave details showing what had been accomplished. For example, the Federal Reserve Act. Beck had to admit this, but went on to say that Wilson was quite incapable of following a long discussion in the Cabinet, and that during the discussions on the Federal Reserve Act he

certainly did not understand them. He said he was astonished that the Allies did not appreciate the meaning of the American Election which took place during the Versailles Conference or shortly before it—I forget which.

L. G. : One person recognised it, and that was little Hughes of Australia, who made a remarkable speech extending over three-quarters of an hour, in which he said in effect, "Who is this man who says he represents America? He does nothing of the sort," etc..

17TH.—Played golf with L. G. at St. George's Hill. He talked much about Northcliffe's serious illness, concerning which he expressed sorrow.

On my way home, I called upon Hulton at his house at Leatherhead. Found him seated in a deck-chair upon the upper terrace. He said he was better but still far from well. He did not look strong. He also talked much about Northcliffe. Hulton gave no signs of intending to retire from business, but on the contrary said he was building extensive new works.

24TH.—L. G. and Worthington-Evans came to Walton Heath to play golf, arriving for lunch. L. G. evidently distressed and depressed about Henry Wilson's assassination.<sup>1</sup> Directly we sat down he said, "This is a horrible business! What effect is it likely to have?"

I replied, "I think public feeling may be expressed as follows: First, a feeling of sorrow and indignation at what has happened. Second, a determination to bring the murderers to justice. Third, a feeling of uneasiness as to whether the police have the situation properly in hand and a determination to have it properly controlled. Fourth, a feeling that what has happened must not be allowed to interfere with the Treaty arrangements, and that under the circumstances the best course is to allow the Irish to work out their own salvation."

L. G. said he thought this a sound diagnosis and was of the same opinion. He referred to Henry Wilson's letter and said that, if attacked regarding their relations, he should read it, as he had always treated Wilson with the greatest kindness and

<sup>1</sup> Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson was shot by two Irishmen while entering his house in Eaton Place, S.W., on June 22nd.

had felt no animosity in regard to his conduct since the Irish dispute.

I asked L. G. whether it was true there was to be an election at an early date. He said, "No, but it is an easy rumour to set about. Why should there be an election till next year?" I told him that Robert Donald had met Bonar Law at Beaverbrook's and that B. L. had expressed his intention of returning to politics whole-heartedly. He said, "You must be one thing or the other." He added that he intended to support L. G. and that between them they could sweep the country. L. G. went back early for a Cabinet meeting. He played golf with Braid as his partner, and played remarkably well, which seemed to cheer him up.

SUNDAY, JULY 2ND, 1922.—To Chequers. L. G. and I had some talk about American political finance. The where-withal is provided by the great interests.

L. G. : I once had the offer of a large sum of money to fight an election. No specific bargain on my part was required, but of course I should have been bound hand and foot to the parties making the offer. I declined to take the money. I was not going to bind myself to the cart-tail of a lot of capitalists. If a political party is financed by great trade interests, the result is certain to be serious, as no public question would be considered on its merits.

8TH.—Played golf with L. G. at St. George's Hill. He said he had heard bad news of Northcliffe and thought he was not likely to recover. He added, "I am sincerely sorry he should have been afflicted in this manner. It is a tragedy."

We talked of trade, Rathenau's assassination, etc.. L. G. said that Rathenau had said to him when they parted, "We shall never meet again. Within three months I shall be a dead man." L. G. added, "Evidently he had been warned."

L. G. takes a serious view of the economic situation, and talked much of the collapse of the German mark and French franc.

Had a chat with Eric Geddes, who is going on a hunting expedition in Sardinia with his three boys. He gave me a minute account of his arrangements for tents, guns, etc.. He said (laughing) that the great drawback of not being in office

was that you could not drive your motor car as you liked, and were held up by the police.

13TH.—To a dinner given by Larkin, the Canadian High Commissioner<sup>1</sup> to the Canadian Bench and Bar now in London, to meet the Lord Chancellor. A lot of speechifying and congratulations to F. E. on his Law of Property Act. I said he had succeeded where other law reformers had failed, because he had made the Bill so voluminous and obscure that no one could understand it, and so it had been allowed to pass ! This amused him. He replied (laughing), "For years to come the conveyancers will be struggling with the intricacies of the new system, while I shall have all the credit." He told a good story about an able, conscientious lawyer who retired owing to a nervous breakdown. After he got well, F. E. sent for him and said he would like to make him a judge. He said he could not accept because he had lost his nerve. He had dreamt that he found himself hurrying along the corridors leading to the House of Lords, naked, except for his wig, and not having read the documents regarding an important appeal just coming on for hearing. He said to F. E., "You have no conception of the agony I went through during that dream. I have never recovered from it, and every now and then it recurs in my waking hours. I think how horrible it would be if such a thing were true. Imagine appearing before the House of Lords clad only in your wig, without your brief and not having read your papers, and then being called upon to open the appeal !"

F. E. said that Haldane is seriously ill with complications. F. E. suggested that a resolution should be sent to him expressing the admiration of the assembled diners for his work in constitutional law. Although F. E. had dined well, after a moment's reflection he dictated a masterly message, couched in most felicitous terms. This was taken down by one of the Canadian judges.

Met Hamar Greenwood, who is very bitter at the way in which he has been treated. He says that when he went to Ireland, the Cabinet would have promised him anything, they were so anxious he should go. When parting with him, Bonar

<sup>1</sup> The Hon. Peter Charles Larkin; High Commissioner, 1922-30; d. 1930.

Law was in tears and said he feared he would never see him again. As it is, he finds himself without a position.

16TH (SUNDAY).—Went to Chequers. Arrived at tea-time.

The P.M. hard at work on his speech about honours. He said he intended to make public reference to the party fund system, and that this would be the first occasion on which any such public statement had been made. He is going to speak for an hour and a quarter to-morrow—too long, I think, and the speech too involved. He is going to offer a commission to enquire as to future honours, but will resolutely decline any investigation of the past.

19TH.—I gave a reunion dinner to the Washington Mission. Balfour, Auckland Geddes and Lee were present—Balfour as pleased as a boy, describing it as a brilliant and kindly idea. He made an excellent speech.

We sent a message to Hughes, the American Secretary of State, and his colleagues. When the message was being discussed, somebody said, "Would it be contrary to diplomatic usage?" Balfour replied, "I don't care a hang for diplomatic usage in a case of this sort." I asked him how he liked speaking in the House of Lords. He said, "Fairly well, but it is like talking to a lot of tombstones. Happily my style of oratory does not require applause, otherwise I should have felt badly. They listen, but don't express their feelings. It is a cold assembly." I said, "Yes, but effective. Tinkering with it might rob it of its virtues."

Balfour agreed and said it was a case of leaving well alone. But the Government had been cornered by people who wanted to alter the Parliament Act. He did not agree with them.

Steed, who was at the dinner, told me that Northcliffe is very bad.

20TH.—A pleasant dinner at Lord Dawson's. A number of doctors present. I noticed that they all took good dinners and enjoyed them. No dieting. I have a maxim: If you want a specially good dinner, dine with the medical profession, who usually act on the principle 'make the best of life while you have the chance.'

22ND.—To Chequers, where I remained until Monday morning. Auckland and Lady Geddes, Eric Geddes, Miss

Cazalet, Miss Peggy Lewis, daughter of Sir George, and, on the Sunday, Sir Alfred and Lady Mond and Lord and Lady Dawson.

Eric Geddes says he has been invited to become President of the Federation of British Industries. He wanted my advice as to whether he should accept. I advised him to do so, but think he only asked my opinion in the hope that it would confirm his own. He enquired what the P.M. would think of his taking the job. I advised him to put the question.

He is a kindly sort of man—an interesting mixture of great ability, simplicity, shrewdness and boyishness. He has wonderful energy and amazing powers as an organiser.

Much talk about trade conditions. Mond and Eric Geddes very interesting. The P.M. most anxious for facts that would confirm his opinion that Germany is on the verge of bankruptcy. Not getting these from Mond and Geddes, he did not pursue the subject. Mond said that if he were the French he would smash Germany. Geddes said that the Dunlop Company, of which he is Chairman, have a big bicycle tyre factory in Germany, and that one of the best tests of a country's prosperity is the number of bicycle tyres required. Just now his factory cannot turn out enough, which leads him to think that the German working-classes, notwithstanding the fall of the mark, are not doing so badly. This was a shock to L. G., but on the other hand it may well be that the tyres are being exported. Who can tell?

L. G. to GEDDES : "What do you think of the political situation?"

GEDDES : Very difficult. I should have an election as soon as possible. Things are going against the Government and I should get out! You want a holiday. I should leave the other people to it.

L. G. : Well, what do you think, Riddell?

R. : I rather agree. But it is difficult to get out at the moment without being charged with running away from an awkward situation, because there is no doubt that the atmosphere just now is not good. Genoa cannot be regarded as an unqualified success, and the Honours controversy has left a nasty taste, although nothing specific has occurred.

L. G. : The atmosphere is bad. It would be impossible to go out now, much as I should like to do so. I am tired and no wonder ! I have had seventeen years continuous work, but I am not going to lay myself under the charge of deserting my friends when they were in a tight place.

GEDDES : I think the Conservatives would like Chamberlain to have his opportunity.

L. G. : Well, I am quite willing. The question is whether he wants his opportunity.

GEDDES : Then there is Bonar Law.

L. G. : But he could not with decency step in front of Chamberlain.

R. : At the Press Gallery Dinner, he said specifically and with emotion that nothing would induce him to do so.

L. G. : Yes, so I heard.

And so the conversation ended, but I heard that next week there is to be a big lunch of Free Church Ministers at which L. G. is to make an important address, so apparently he is still in the fighting line.

The evening was spent in song, the Geddes brothers functioning with great vigour. The delight of Eric Geddes when rendering Harry Lauder's songs is a wonderful thing to see. He would do well on the music-hall stage, being a good actor and able to assume the manner of a music-hall favourite.

29TH.—To Churt, L. G.'s new house high up among the heather—a pretty but lonely spot with fine views. The house comfortable and well designed. No gardens as yet, but great preparations. L. G. spends most of his time sitting in the loggias, of which there are three, one outside his bedroom window and two on the ground floor. After Genoa, where he considers he benefited from being much out of doors, he is keener than ever on fresh air and stays out until quite late.

We talked of his political future. It is clear that he has not made up his mind what he wants to do. Indeed, he said plainly that he "should be guided by events." He is feeling the constant strain, but does not wish to relinquish the position. He is preparing for a retreat, but is also arranging to carry on the fight. The Whips' Office is to be reorganised. This week the



Dissenters have been mobilised at a lunch, and generally speaking, I doubt if he will go until he is turned out or thinks it impossible to carry on.

This week he has delivered three great speeches—one on India, one on reparations, and one on Turkey. I congratulated him on his reparations speech, a great performance. He said he had had a hard week, but thought he had spoken well.

I said he had ended the session in a blaze of oratorical glory, which made him laugh.

On Sunday morning, L. G. sent to my room two memoranda, one from Dr. Wirth, the German Chancellor<sup>1</sup> and the other dealing with Poincaré's forthcoming proposals. Poincaré arrives in London to-day, Sunday. Wirth's memorandum is a piteous appeal to L. G. to intervene. He says that if Germany is pressed, the Government, who desire to fulfil her obligations, will be put out and probably assassinated. Poincaré is evidently seizing the opportunity to endeavour to relieve France of the debts she owes to England and America. He sees that German reparations are doubtful and so hopes to secure some relief at the expense of France's creditors.

After breakfast I had a long talk with L. G..

L. G. : Wirth is an honest man, although no doubt anxious to make the best of his case. Poincaré's proposals are monstrous. Under them we and America would be the only sufferers. If Poincaré puts them forward, I shall give him snuff.

R. : It is evident that Poincaré is working to get rid of the debts. The German failure to pay the indemnity is no reason why these should be cancelled. We must not be weak with the Germans, but on the other hand, there is no reason why we should give way to France. I have no sympathy for Germany, but it is obvious that she will have to be granted a moratorium.

L. G. : I feel sure that France meets with little sympathy in this country, and that she is losing ground every day.

R. : I agree, but do not let us forget that we lost nearly a million men in the war, and that the feelings of their relations regarding the Germans must be considered.

[I gave L. G. a book on French finance, issued by the

<sup>1</sup> From May 1921 to November 1922, when he resigned because he was unable to carry measures to stabilise the mark.

Bankers' Trust of America, which contains interesting information.]

L. G. : It is most valuable, and I shall use it in my discussions with Poincaré. It might be useful to invite Poincaré to the Eisteddfod at Neath, which is to be held on Thursday.

R. : It would be a mistake. The French are suspicious of such attentions. It will be wiser to treat Poincaré in a formal business-like way.

L. G. : I do not agree ; he would like the attention.

R. : If he allows himself to be thus entangled it may be his downfall. [I was on the point of saying that the same thing happened to Briand when he played in the historic golf match at Cannes, but refrained.]

L. G. perturbed at the prospect of political complications due to the death of Scott Dickson, the Lord Justice Clerk. It seems there are several aspirants for the position, who are eager to escape from the Coalition ship, which they regard as on the rocks. From L. G.'s observations about this, I gather that their fears are well founded. He says the Tories are becoming more and more anxious for their own Government. He says also that Munro<sup>1</sup> is entitled to the vacant judgeship. L. G. thinks M. does not want it, as he prefers to stay in London. If he takes it that will relieve L. G. of an awkward situation.

Turnberry, Scotland. Aug. 15th.—Much distressed by telegram announcing Northcliffe's death. He was a remarkable person. Some day I must write an account of him.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord Alness, who eventually accepted the appointment.

<sup>2</sup> I did this when I unveiled a Memorial to him at St. Dunstan's, Fleet Street, on October 2nd, 1930.

## Chapter XLV

*Sir Robert Horne's American debt plan—The plight of the Greeks in Asia Minor—Curzon's absences from the F. O.—A stormy interview with Poincaré—L. G. on "the coming crash"—He resigns—"It has been a wonderful time."*

SEPTEMBER, 1ST 1922.—To Churt. L. G., Horne, Grigg, Miss Stevenson, J. T. Davies and Shakespeare.

L. G. told a good story of Gordon Hewart. When called upon to answer a long list of questions in the H. of C. all relating to the same subject, he replied, "The answer is in the plural."

I had an interesting talk with Horne about his future. The question is whether he shall take a Scottish judgeship, go on with politics or take to commerce. The political future is uncertain. His plan of life has been to end up with a Scottish judgeship, and he has not abandoned the intention. He wants to be with his old mother, to whom he is devoted, during the last years of her life. She is now eighty-five, I think. Important people have been urging him to return to Scotland and take part in Scottish public affairs. L. G., the Lord Chancellor and Chamberlain are all anxious that Horne should stay in politics here.

*Later.*—Horne told me that he is going to America in October regarding the British debt. He regards the mission as very awkward. Congress has so tied the hands of the American Government that he does not see what he can hope to accomplish. He proposes to submit a plan, however, whereby the debt would be repaid over forty years as against the twenty-five proposed by America. This would make a substantial difference. He considers that the result of our action in reference to the debt has been greatly to enhance our credit and that the financial supremacy of London is as great as ever.

R. : Many leading Americans are strongly in favour of remitting all war debts, but the American people are not.

HORNE : I agree. Taft put it well. He said the people of the Middle West visualise a man called Uncle Jonathan sending shiploads of gold coins to England which the English spent. Now they want to see a man called John Bull return those coins.

CHURT : 2ND.—To Played golf with L. G., Horne and Grigg. Miss Stevenson, J. T. Davies and Shakespeare also at the house.

Things have gone very badly with the Greeks<sup>1</sup> and evidently L. G. is much perturbed.

3RD (SUNDAY).—Mrs. Dashwood arrived to-night with a letter from T. P. O'Connor, begging L. G. to do something for the Greeks. He explained to her at length the impossibility, and strongly criticised the action of King Constantine, who, he said, was responsible for what had happened. Among other things he had appointed a most inefficient and unsuitable general. L. G. further said that as far as he could make out, he, Balfour and Curzon were the only three people in the country who were in favour of the Greeks. He deplored the situation, but could do nothing.

4TH—Grigg says the P.M. really wants a holiday. To outward appearance he seems well, but he has lost his power of initiative. It is difficult to get him now-a-days to devise fresh expedients. Grigg thinks strongly that he should resign as soon as possible and take a rest. Much talk with Grigg about the Poincaré Note received on Saturday. The P.M. has asked Grigg to draft an answer. He tried to get into touch with Curzon, but found he had gone to Montacute, where there is no telephone—as Grigg said, an extraordinary thing to do at a time when foreign affairs are in such a critical state. Grigg is afraid that the P.M. will engage in a dog-fight with Poincaré. He thinks this most inadvisable.

<sup>1</sup> Since the end of July, Kemal Pasha, at the head of a reorganised army, had been driving the Greeks headlong towards the coast. In September they evacuated Smyrna, and the Turkish victory was complete. In the following month complications between the British forces and the Turks at Chanak and Ismid were avoided by the skilful diplomacy of Sir Charles Harington. The Treaty of Lausanne, signed in July 1923, recognised Turkey's right to Asia Minor.

Apart from other questions, the political situation is most complicated. There is a strong movement in the Conservative Party for a Conservative leader. On the other hand, Chamberlain and the Lord Chancellor are anxious to go on as before. One thing is certain—there is going to be an early election—perhaps as early as October. L. G. is seeing the Liberals at Churt this week, and in November the Conservatives have their annual meeting. The Lord Chancellor and Winston are strongly in favour of an early election.

Things have not gone well for L. G.. Greece, America's attitude in regard to our debt, our relations with France, and Russia, are all awkward problems on the wrong side of the ledger.

15TH.—Much talk about the Turkish situation, which is deplorable. Smyrna is in flames and the civilian population (non-Turkish) in a horrible predicament. Kemal Pasha, completely victorious, is dictating to Europe. The pro-Greek policy has proved disastrous, as Foch and Henry Wilson prophesied when it was finally put in force at San Remo. Foch said to me that it would end in terrible disaster, and Wilson acquiesced. We have been backing the wrong horse. Venizelos was largely responsible.

When I arrived at Downing Street, L. G. was with Winston. L. G. came hastily into the drawing-room bringing with him a newspaper containing a speech by Gwilym, his son, which he handed with pride to Mrs. L. G., who seemed depressed and not at all in her usual spirits. The speech was quite a good production, simple and direct. L. G. pointed out the best passage.

As we sat down to dinner, L. G. remarked, "I am tired and have had a hard day." Beyond this he gave no sign of anxiety or distress at the situation. His courage is remarkable and he shows to best advantage when encountering "dreadful odds." Some of his policies are not happy, but when called upon to face a crisis, he is splendid.

After dinner, he and Hankey went through and settled the draft naval and military instructions to the forces in the Near East decided upon by the Cabinet. L. G. loud in his denunciations of Curzon, who had left the office at 7.30 and

gone into the country. He says that Curzon's health is still bad and that he is quite unfitted to hold his position.

L. G. : He has lost his nerve. He has plenty of brains but is feeble in a crisis. You will hardly believe that during this critical period he has frequently gone to places where it was difficult to communicate with him. He attended the Paris Peace Conference in March and was responsible for the decisions arrived at and for giving effect to them. He did absolutely nothing in the latter respect but simply let things drift. The attitude of Rumania and Serbia is important. The freedom of the Straits is vital to the Rumanians, as it is their main highway, but the F.O. had taken no steps to ascertain their views. Therefore the *Daily Telegraph* knew more than we did, and had I been called upon to answer a question in the House of Commons concerning the Rumanian policy, I should have had to refer the House to the columns of the *Daily Telegraph*. The Foreign Office is in a bad state. The other morning I telephoned at 10.30. No one was there. The Turkish Minister, who was here the other day, should have been seen, but no one saw him but an underling at the F.O.. I did not know he was here until I heard of his presence from an outsider. Then the Italian Ambassador had been pressing for an interview. Curzon asked me not to see him, so I did not. But to-day I was compelled to do so as he could find no one at the F.O.. The result is that I have been with him for an hour, which I could ill spare.

Then the talk drifted to the atomic theory, about which L. G. had read in a report of the meeting of the British Association. He had picked out the most interesting items.

R. : How did you find time to read these reports ?

L. G. : It is the only way I am able to go on. One has to divert one's thoughts from public affairs for a while or how could one keep sane ?

Hankey told me that he had been for his holidays and had bathed seventy times in a month !

24TH.—To Churt with Grigg. The P.M. outwardly in good spirits but obviously anxious concerning the Turkish situation, which is in a critical phase. There were meetings yesterday and to-day between Curzon and Poincaré in Paris.

Yesterday they had a great flare-up. Poincaré, according to Curzon, spoke like a demented schoolmaster lecturing a naughty boy. Curzon left the room as a protest, and after some twenty minutes Poincaré fetched him back and apologised for his conduct, at the same time making excuses. L. G. was delighted. He remarked, "You see what Poincaré is. Had I been his victim, everyone would have said L. G. was responsible for what had occurred." He continued, "Curzon should not have left the room. He should have given Poincaré a smashing blow in return. I should not have left the field of battle."

I came home on Monday. On Sunday I went to Hall Barn to lunch with Burnham, returning to Churt about 6 p.m.. On Saturday evening, Sunday morning and Sunday evening the telephone was busy—reports arriving and instructions being despatched as in the days of the war—L. G. all the time avid for information. Horne, Lady Sykes and her husband were the other members of the party. On Saturday and Sunday evenings we had a cinema performance, quite well done. Curzon is to report to-day (Monday 26th) on his visit to Paris. I said to L. G., Horne and Grigg on Monday morning that it looked as if we were drifting into another war. If Kemal does not observe the injunction to refrain from entering the neutral zones, it means fighting, and no one can tell where the conflict will end. We have now agreed to give the Turks Constantinople, Anatolia and Eastern Thrace, so that we should be fighting for a shadow. So far as concerns the Straits, no arrangements will prevent the Turks from mining them should there be a future war. The French and Italians cannot be relied upon.

L. G., who spoke in a very quiet manner, quite contrary to his usual style, said, "The position is most serious. It may mean killing and that is always serious. We are seeking to give the non-Turkish population in Constantinople and Thrace an opportunity to escape before the Turks arrive. The freedom of the Straits is vital. We cannot accept the Turkish guarantee. They broke faith once and they may do so again. Their action cost us millions of pounds. You say" (alluding to a remark of mine) "that the country will not stand for a fresh war. I

disagree. The country will willingly support our action regarding the Straits by force of arms if need be."

R. : The expense of all this will be enormous. We ought to clear out of these countries, Turkey, Bulgaria, etc., where we have missions, and leave the people to their own devices. We cannot police Europe. Henry Wilson gave the warning that our military commitments were beyond our capacity. It looks as if he was right.

L. G. : We are committed in Turkey.

On Sunday evening, L. G. remarked that the Speaker had asked to see him as to summoning Parliament.

L. G. : That is not to be welcomed. We don't want talk during a crisis.

Horne said interesting things about Curzon. He described him as possessing a remarkable knowledge of foreign affairs and remarkable powers of exposition, "but," said Horne, "his knowledge of human nature is at fault. He does not understand the ordinary man, and most men are ordinary." Horne was full of fight in regard to the Turks but did not seem to know the details of all that has happened since November 1918. He described the P.M. as more anti-Turk than pro-Greek and said that L. G. was living in the past—in the days of Gladstone—and that he (Horne) often thought this when he heard him speak on the subject. I said that L. G. was both anti-Turk and pro-Greek. I told Horne that Venizelos had captivated L. G., President Wilson and Kerr. Horne was much interested.

OCTOBER 13TH, 1922.—Lunched with L. G., who greeted me as "Riddell Pasha." He added, "Speaking more seriously, I must admit you have been consistent. You have always opposed the pro-Greek policy."

He said the political situation was dubious and he thought the crash was coming. Otherwise very little of interest.

14TH.—Owing to communications from the Paris correspondents of the London newspapers and news agencies, I made representations to Curzon regarding the lack of publicity concerning the work of the recent Paris Conference. Poincaré saw the Press and told them more or less what had happened, whereas our people gave practically no information, so that the



French point of view alone was communicated to the Press. Curzon wrote in reply a long, indefinite sort of letter.

19TH.—At 4.15 this afternoon, Miss Stevenson telephoned to say that the P.M. had gone to Buckingham Palace with his resignation. The party meeting took place to-day, and decided by a large majority against the Coalition.

Later I called and found L. G. seated by the fire in the secretary's room with a small notebook in his hand, busy thinking over the speech which he is to make at Leeds on Saturday.

R. : Well, the die is cast !

L. G. : Yes, and I am glad of it. One could not go on under the circumstances.

R. : No. Any man who has to stand up against violent public attacks from his opponents must have a solid party behind him.

L. G. : Yes, one cannot work properly when one feels that one may be stabbed in the back at any moment.

R. : Shall we have an election ?

L. G. : That all depends on Bonar.

R. : Will he be able to form a Cabinet ?

L. G. : That remains to be seen. I don't think he likes the position.

R. : Do you remember a cartoon in *Punch* which showed a footman throwing open a door in response to loud knocks by Lord John Russell, depicted as a small boy running away round the corner, wondering whether he had done well to knock ?

L. G. : That quite sums up the situation. That is what Bonar is thinking to-night !

R. : I thought I should find you packing up.

L. G. (laughing) : I shall leave J. T. [Davies] and the others to do that. I am committed to all this speechifying. I suppose I could put it off, but it would be difficult. I mean to make a very moderate speech. I shall not attack anybody. What do you say ?

R. : I am sure you are right. It is a romantic moment when the captain who has guided the ship through so many storms for five years hands over the helm to someone else. It might be well to touch on this in your speech.

L. G. (making notes in his little book) : Yes.

Then he got up and walked about the room and put out his hand. I said, "It has been a wonderful time!" He said, "Yes!" (shaking hands with me heartily). "It has been a wonderful time." Then he walked away into the Cabinet room. I felt a pang as I parted from him.

20TH.—At the luncheon to the Prince of Wales at the Guildhall, J. T. Davies took me aside and, with a beaming face, said he had been appointed a Director of the Suez Canal. I complimented him and said he richly deserved it, considering his services. He is a most active, able man, and has been of incalculable value to the P.M.. He has a wonderful memory and a marvellous gift for taking care of documents and producing them when wanted at short notice. He organised the travelling and hotel arrangements in connection with the Peace Conferences with remarkable skill, and his unfailing courtesy, tact and good temper have made him a universal favourite. Personally, I am much indebted to him and Miss Stevenson, a highly-educated, charming woman, for valuable help in regard to my Press work. Sylvester, J. T.'s successor has had an interesting career. Before the war he won a prize for fast shorthand and typing. He became demonstrator for one of the typewriter companies, later he became a professional shorthand-writer, and then during the war he drifted into Hankey's office and became his secretary. Now he is one of the P.M.'s secretaries. He is a terrific worker and most efficient and obliging. Horne drove home with me. He remarked that he must come to a decision regarding the future, as to which he seemed undecided. I said, "You can turn your mind to almost anything and make a success of it. The question is, what do you feel to be your duty, and what will make you happy? You are the only person who can give an answer. There is only one other thing. If you mean to go on with politics, set to work to make yourself financially independent. A politician with inadequate means is in a precarious position." He said, "I quite agree with all you say."

## Chapter XLVI

*L. G.'s election prophecies—A dinner at the Inner Temple—Bonar Law denies an intrigue against L. G.—L. G. again looks towards a Centre Party—His views on a capital levy and the restoration of agriculture.*

NOVEMBER 4TH, 1922.—Miss S. rang up to say that L. G. would like me to dine with him to-night (Saturday) at Vincent Square, where he has a house. He has not been pleased with my attitude concerning Eastern affairs. He was kind but did not greet me with his customary jollity, and shook hands—he does not usually shake hands. He referred with mild disapproval to some humorous observations I had made about him at the Press Club Dinner on the previous Saturday, which had been widely reported.

He talked much about the election and made elaborate calculations as to the probable results. He thinks that Labour will get about 100 seats.<sup>1</sup> I agreed but said they would get many more but for their proposals as to a capital levy.

L. G. : I believe Sidney Webb was responsible for that. He is clever but has no sense in such matters. He does not understand electioneering.

Later on L. G. said, "I don't know that their programme will have such a bad effect. Why should the man in the street object to a capital levy? It will not hurt him. If the Labour Party were to get into power, they would do nothing serious. They would be run by the bureaucracy. Everything would go on much as before." He added, "I don't want to take charge. I have no wish to."

I told him I thought the public were sick of back-chat and not interested in personal disputes between Birkenhead and others. They were chiefly interested in the great issues—housing, unemployment, foreign policy, etc..

<sup>1</sup> Labour actually obtained 142, the Conservatives 344, the National Liberals 53, and the Independent Liberals 64.

L. G. : But you must have some amusing and fighting speeches to brighten up an election.

R. : Well, the result has not been achieved. The public are taking very little interest.

One of the workers in the L. G. machine here interposed by stating that the meetings were very badly attended, and that at several of Macnamara's meetings there had not been more than thirty people.

L. G. admitted this.

Lord Dawson came in and we had an interesting talk about scientific matters. I am speaking to the Edinburgh Philosophical Society on Tuesday on British achievement. L. G. and Dawson much entertained by an epitome of British discoveries during the past fifty years which I have compiled from various reliable sources. We talked about Watt and the steam engine and the popular fallacy that he invented it.

[Note : I feel more and more how disastrous the Eastern policy has been. To-day there are 400,000 wretched people in Turkey, fleeing from the wrath to come. All this is due to our having backed the Greeks and sent them to Smyrna.]

15TH.—Much talk of a combination between the Bonar Lawites and the Asquithians. No doubt B. L. and Co. are anxious to fortify themselves with new blood.

Dined at the Inner Temple. The Lord Chancellor (Lord Cave) evidently much gratified by his promotion, on which I congratulated him. He said, "It is an immense satisfaction to get a position regarded in one's youth as the sum and total of every possible ambition."

I replied that it was a great achievement. Campbell's *Lives* showed what a distinguished race the Chancellors had been. The book should be brought up to date. It was a proud thing to join the line. I referred to a letter written by a distinguished lawyer to Queen Elizabeth, declining the office because he disagreed with her policy regarding Roman Catholics, but referring in laudatory terms to the outstanding dignity of the position. Cave was pleased and interested. He reminded me that some time ago I gave him a putter. He said it had much improved his game and would now become a valued appendage of a Lord Chancellor.

I had never dined at the Inner Temple before. The ceremony was interesting. You dine in the Hall. For dessert you go into a large room called the Parliament Chamber and sit at a long table. For coffee and cigars you go to the Library, where you spend the remainder of the evening. One of the judges said to me, "Living a life of this sort is like living in a cloister. We are really cut off from actual touch with the world."

16TH.—The day after the election.

Long chat with Burnham at the *D. T.* Offices. He told me that when he arrived back from Geneva on the Saturday he found that Bonar Law had been telephoning asking to see him. On the Sunday, Burnham called on B. L. and had a long chat. B. L. denied there was an intrigue against L. G. and ascribed recent events to the action of the party machine in the constituencies. For various reasons, the local party leaders had become sick of L. G. and determined to get rid of him. B. L. gave Burnham a history of his relations with Beaverbrook. He said that when B. came to London he knew no one. He got into touch with Bonar, who came from the same district in Canada, and treated him as if he were a hero. Bonar naïvely remarked, "We all like hero-worship, and I gradually became very friendly with him. I usually spend my week-ends at his house. To show his disinterestedness, when I became Prime Minister he telephoned saying, 'I see that I may be a hindrance to you. If you think it better, I will keep away from you.'"

18TH.—To Churt for the week-end. Found L. G. in wonderful form, laughing and carrying on like a boy. Mrs. L. G., Megan, Miss Lewis, Grigg and Shakespeare were there.

L. G. busy serenading his daughter and Miss Lewis, as if he had been a boy of eighteen instead of a man of sixty.

Much talk about the elections. L. G. quoted figures to show that while the Conservatives have not half the votes, they have three-fifths of the members. He made great play with this.

R. : I don't think it is good to make too much of the point just now when there is so much unrest. The answer is that your Government is responsible for framing the election basis.

No doubt it is unfair, but the late Government is responsible.

L. G. : Cheap sneers at my Government will not alter the fact. I am sick of all this talk about saying things that will cause unrest.

R. : Of course you will do what you think best. But from your point of view I think you will make a mistake to antagonise the Conservatives and, by so doing, prevent the fusion which is desirable in the national interest.

L. G. did not say much in reply.

The change in the atmosphere since he has been out of office is amazing. Now he is working like a little dynamo to break up the Conservative Party by bringing the more advanced section to his flag, to join up with the "Wee Frees," and to detach the more moderate members of the Labour Party—this with the object of forming a Central Party of which he will be leader. He says, however, that it would be a disaster if the Government were turned out during the next two years, and that it would not suit his purpose. I directed attention to a statement in the *Morning Post* regarding a speech by Cosgrave, the Irish leader, in which he said in effect that Ireland should free herself from British rule by a process of attrition. L. G. expressed surprise and then said, with much emphasis, "If that is their game I shall join with the Government through thick and thin to defeat it. One must look after one's own country before anything else. If the Irish make such an attempt they will be acting most dishonestly, and every good citizen must join to defeat them. Anyway Bonar Law can rely on me."

I like to hear him in this mood. When British prestige is involved he is always on the patriotic side, irrespective of party or persons.

I said that dissenting Conservatives, like Horne and Worthington-Evans, would find themselves in an awkward position. They could not well join the Liberals and so were like Mahomet's coffin. Grigg, who is much elated by his victory at Oldham, remarked that things would turn, and that four years was not long to wait. I said, who could tell what would happen in four years.

They seemed to think that Worthington-Evans would take office—probably Lord Privy Seal.

L. G. eloquently described the just and righteous indignation of the Labour Party at Parliamentary Representation disproportionate to the number of votes they had cast. He said, "The people of this country will not stand such injustice." He also prophesies that in course of time the public will not stand for the war debt as it is. He said this may be twenty years hence, but they will certainly repudiate full liability for principal and interest, having regard to the changed value of money. He spoke not unsympathetically of the capital levy, but expressed surprise at some of the commercial men who had supported it. He is now hot-foot about agriculture. He wants, very wisely, to get more people on the land, and evidently has in mind some sort of Government subsidy. Would-be agriculturists are to be provided with land on fairly easy terms. I said, "The trouble is the buildings. There is land in plenty and heaps of would-be agriculturists, but hitherto it has been impossible to settle them owing to the cost of the necessary buildings." L. G. said that local regulations will have to be relaxed, and that people who want to settle on the land will have to be permitted to put up such dwellings as they think suitable for their purpose. In short, they must be left to house themselves as they do in new countries.

I dissented on the ground that it would be a calamity to disfigure the country with a mass of ugly buildings. Nevertheless I agreed that building regulations require overhauling. I said that railway rates for the carriage of agricultural produce are most unfair and prejudicial and require revision. He heartily agreed.

On Monday we played golf at Hindhead. L. G. played remarkably well and seemed remarkably well. On Saturday I thought him jumpy, which was not surprising considering the efforts he has made during the past three weeks. Before he got up he wrote a newspaper article with his own hand. He is evidently very bitter against Bonar Law, Curzon, etc., and talked in the most bitter manner of Curzon, who, he said, was responsible for what had happened in Turkey, as he had neglected during the past ten or twelve months to take advantage of opportunities for settlement.

I should have said that, when we began to talk about the

election figures, L. G. expressed strong indignation at Bonar Law having ventured to say in his message that the nation had expressed confidence in the Government. I said, "What else could he do? After having won an election! Every politician would have done the same!"

L. G. (with even greater indignation): Politicians are as honourable as anyone else, and I am bound to say that very few would have issued such a message, knowing it did not represent the facts. It is the business of politicians to consider such figures, and when Bonar issued that notice he knew quite well it was inaccurate.

DECEMBER 10TH (SUNDAY).—To Churt to dinner. Interesting talk with L. G. about Clemenceau and President Wilson. Fundamentally he does not like Clemenceau. He said he is not likely to go down to history as a very great man. He lacked vision, and his views were restricted to pressing France's immediate claims.

R.: When all is said, in a measure he won the war. He came to power when France was in a bad way and revived her drooping energies in a remarkable manner.

L. G. admitted this, but rather intimated that other people had done the same thing. I said, "Yes, but Clemenceau will always be an outstanding figure."

L. G.: But Wilson was a bigger man. He had great vision. He saw the inadvisability of perpetuating international discords.

R.: History will show whether he went the right way about it.

L. G.: I think he did. He has not had his due. Then again he showed great courage. Before the war he voiced the cause of the common people against the propertied classes in America in a most courageous and effective way. That is why the ruling classes in America hated him. That was the real cause of his downfall.

R.: Yes, I remember giving you a copy of his pre-war speeches and saying you would find them an eloquent and convincing statement of the democratic case.

L. G.: Yes, I remember.

R.: His chief defect was vanity.



L. G. : I should not call him vain. I should call him egotistical.

R. : And pragmatical.

L. G. : He had the courage of his opinions.

13TH.—Delivered Founder's Day oration at Birkbeck College. Haldane in the chair. I dined with him and his sister beforehand. They were most kind and hospitable. He is very courteous, but rather pompous and full of amiable vanity. Nevertheless he is a great person. He has been very badly treated. I felt sorry to see him looking so old and worn. He gave an interesting account of his old mother, aged 97. She is still bright and fresh. He says she has improved with age. The older she gets the more sagacious and *spirituelle* she becomes. She is certainly a wonderful old lady and has produced some brainy children. Haldane says, that, although feebler in body, he is as strong, if not stronger than ever, in mind. Mentally he never gets tired.

20TH.—Called on L. G. at Abingdon Street. Found him busy with his party organisers. He asked me to drive with him to his dentist's in Wimpole Street. He told me he was writing his articles with his own hand, as he thought it good practice. It made his style more concentrated. He said he was tired and anxious to get right away. Everything he does is the subject of comment and he is anxious for peace and quiet.

R. : For ten years you have been the most prominent person in the world. You cannot expect to slip into oblivion just when you wish. It is the old story. When attained, the end we strive for often proves overwhelming. And yet you would not be happy if it were otherwise.

21ST.—L. G. started for Algeciras.

## Chapter XLVII

*To Spain with L. G.—Birkenhead on the incapacity of the new Government—Balfour's thirty notebooks on the stars—L. G.'s hostility to the French—The occupation of the Ruhr—The "strong, silent man" myth.*

JANUARY 11TH, 1923.—Arrived at Algeciras. L. G.'s greeting was cordial, but not effusive. I fear I am still in his black books owing to my Turkish proclivities and newspaper policy during the election. He told me with justifiable pride that he had walked twelve miles two or three days before, a feat he had not accomplished for years. [He will be sixty in a few days. Walking exploits appear to gratify statesmen. If I remember rightly, Mr. Gladstone recorded in his Diary that when nearly sixty-four, while staying at Balmoral, he walked thirty-three miles! But I did not mention this to L. G.] He said that when he woke in the mornings, he did so with a sense of relief that he would not have to face a day full of care and anxiety and that Bonar Law had told him he felt the same when he resigned. I thought, however, that notwithstanding his protestations of relief, he is naturally chagrined at the way in which he has been treated.

He spoke much of the Franco-German situation, emphasising the gross wickedness and stupidity of the French. He said that both Clemenceau and Foch were against the French policy. The latter advocated the seizure of the left bank of the Rhine so as to secure a natural boundary, but opposed a further advance into Germany. L. G. said these were still Foch's views. He added that he regarded the international situation with great alarm, and more than once referred to the fall in the French and Italian exchanges. Like a doctor who has prophesied the death of a patient, he hopes for the best but is confident of the worst!

During one of our conversations on this subject (we had many), I said rather foolishly that even politicians had no monopoly of wisdom, as shown by recent events. This made

L. G. much annoyed. He remarked, "Nor do newspaper proprietors possess any monopoly of wisdom." I said, "Such a claim would make them ridiculous."

12TH.—It was proposed that we should motor to Granada, but L. G. was not at all well so we could not go. He evidently felt very queer and took his temperature several times. Mrs. L. G. said it was dangerous for him to take his temperature. He is so unskilful that the records are often wrong.

I said (laughing): "He is more expert at gauging the temperature of a public meeting." This amused Mrs. L. G.. She is a wonderful person, quite calm under all conditions.

13TH.—We started for Seville, where we arrived at about 8 o'clock. The journey was long and tedious and evidently very trying for L. G., who was not feeling well. The jolting made him very irritable.

We visited the Cathedral and Alcazar Palace.

L. G. much pleased by the attentions of the Archbishop and Cardinals. He is like a pretty woman who is being neglected by her quondam admirers. She is delighted to find that her charms are still potent with a new set.

15TH.—We returned to Algeciras, going part of the way by train.

We lunched on the way back. L. G. still seedy and irritable. During lunch he took from his pocket the draft of an article written in pencil and read it out. It contained most bitter references to the French.

The Birkenheads arrived—Lord and Lady B., the two girls and Miss Harper. B. and I played golf in the afternoon. He did not seem well, and said his eyes were still very bad. He asked my opinion regarding the political situation and dilated at length on the incapacity and inferiority of the present Government. He thought they would prove so ineffective in the difficult times ahead that the country would soon get tired of them and call for abler men. I said one never could tell, but I thought the country was rather tired of clever men and anxious for a little mediocrity. Also that the machine was a powerful thing and that the chances were that if Bonar's health lasted the Government would carry on for a considerable time. Also that the Labour Party were organising much better

than the other parties and that unless there was a fusion of the three opposing sections, Labour would make great progress at the next election. I said I had no knowledge of L. G.'s preparations, but he was in this dilemma, that the more he organised, the wider he would make the breach, while if he did not organise, he and his associates might find themselves in an awkward position if and when an election came. I asked him whether it was necessary for himself, Chamberlain and other Conservative leaders to resign after the Carlton Club meeting, and whether it would not have been better for the Government to ask for a vote of confidence and, if refused, to have gone to the country. He replied that the Conservative leaders had no alternative but to resign. He thought, however, that the Government should have asked for a vote of confidence before the meeting.

He spoke much of Ireland and Turkey, which he said were the proximate causes of the Government's downfall. He asked why L. G. had been so pro-Greek. I gave an explanation to the effect already stated. B. described the policy as most disastrous. Regarding Ireland, he said that while the Conservative Party were unable actively to oppose the settlement, they had been displeased with it and thought that he and Chamberlain had sold the pass.

In the evening B. told an amusing story about one of his first cases—a breach of promise case, tried before a dignified old judge. B. was for the defendant, who had no case. He made a speech in which he said that the only evidence against his client was that he had been guilty of kissing too much, adding that the case should be a warning to all of us—to his Lordship (loud laughter), to the jury and to the counsel engaged. The result was that the plaintiff got trifling damages. Naturally the judge did not like this allusion to himself. "But," said B., "what could he do?"

B. said that he had been staying with Balfour, who was delightful in his own home. They had gone out walking in the moonlight. A. J. B. was most interesting on the stars, and said that he had written thirty notebooks full of astronomical comments which he offered to show B.. B. was not interested in astronomy, but thought he would like to see the books,

which he described as remarkable pieces of erudition. He gave a dramatic account of the last days in 1919 of Swinfen Eady, Master of the Rolls. When Eady was dying of cancer, B., who was not on very good terms with him, went to see him. With death in his face, Eady strongly urged his claims to a peerage. "He was only struggling to keep alive," said B., "in order to get the peerage before he died." He added, "I motored back to London and went to see you (L. G.) and urged you to recommend him for a peerage. You said, 'Well, you are Lord Chancellor, and if you think it should be done, I agree.' The King agreed also and therefore Eady got his peerage."

[Note: If my memory is correct, B. told us also that he motored back to Eady's home and gave the dying man the letter conferring the title. Eady lived only for a fortnight. This incident was typical of Birkenhead, a most generous-hearted, lovable creature. Peace be to his ashes.]

17TH.—I spent a couple of hours talking with L. G.. He had been busy writing a newspaper article. He read portions and asked my opinion. I strongly urged him to mitigate his references to the French. The article as prepared included some of the pungent matter I heard him read on the previous day. He discussed my points, and eventually struck out most of the inflammatory portions. He is certainly amenable when he asks for advice, and never deterred by pride or vanity from acting on suggestions that commend themselves to him. When speaking of Birkenhead, L. G. said that during the Irish crisis he was wonderful. His judgment was unerring. He had remarkable courage and L. G. came to trust him entirely.

L. G. told me that Sutherland says that conditions in the constituencies have entirely changed. Now Labour is the only properly organised party. Their organisation is about as good as it can be, while that of the other parties is old-fashioned and inappropriate to present conditions. He says also that if the three parties split the vote at the election, Labour will make extraordinary progress. L. G. said his difficulty was that if he organised his own party, that would tend to intensify the differences between him on the one hand and the Conservatives and Asquithian Liberals on the other. He said he did not

propose to go to the House of Commons much this session, but intended to help the Government. The position of the nation was far too dangerous for him to oppose rational measures. We required a united front.

L. G. and I went for a walk, during which he discussed at length the situation in the Ruhr.<sup>1</sup> He said that Bonar Law had not managed things well in regard to France, that he ought not to have broken with Poincaré; that the French did not understand Bonar's brusque manners; that he (L. G.) had managed to keep the French from going into the Ruhr, and that if B. L. had adopted the same tactics, he might have done the same. I said that perhaps it was just as well to bring matters to a head. Was it good policy to be always trying to persuade people to do what they did not wish to do? Sometimes it was better to state your own view and let people go their own way. I forgot to say that L. G. has again been reading Birrell's essays, of which he spoke in high terms and from which he read several extracts aloud.

FEBRUARY 25TH (SUNDAY).—To Churt for the night. L. G. told me he had been busy on his Rectorial Address for Edinburgh. He said Arthur Balfour had advised him to prepare it carefully but not to attempt to read it. The best course was to speak in the ordinary way, not attempting to follow the phrasing of the written address, and then to hand the manuscript to the Secretary of the University and the reporters. A. J. B. said he had tried to read an address and that this was a failure. He had also tried to deliver one from voluminous notes, which was also a failure. He had arrived at the conclusion that the course suggested was the best. L. G. said he should adopt it, telling the students beforehand that he was handing out the more formal notes for printing. He gave me the draft to read and asked for my comments.

He talked much of the present position of democracy, which he described as being severely on its trial. What the future of this country was going to be, he did not know. He said, "The trouble is that mankind are always in blinkers." He added, "You are always faced with vested interests whenever you try to make any reform. If you attempt to pull down a

<sup>1</sup> Parts of which had just been occupied by French and Belgian forces.

worn-out old tree, hordes of little insects will emerge who make a living out of it. I have always found that if you attempt to make any change you are met with opposition from hordes of people of whose existence you were previously unaware."

R. : Two things seem fairly certain—one, the Labour Party will make great progress, at any rate for a time, and two, your little group of Conservatives will return to the fold, because that is their real home and they have nowhere else to go.

L. G. agreed with this, but said that the keepers of the fold might be unwilling to admit Birkenhead.

Turning to another subject, he said he would like to point out that America is in a great measure responsible for the unsettled state of Europe and that it is her duty to take part in an attempted settlement.

L. G. was kind and friendly as usual. He is a wonderful host, but I can see that he is rather nettled by my disagreement with certain of his policies. Except in cases of necessity we never discuss unpleasant subjects, but he is a master of the art of what may be called subtle indication. No one is more facile in the use of hints, slight changes in manner and inflections of voice. His subtle ways and reputation for subtlety have largely contributed to his downfall. The war being over, rightly or wrongly the Conservatives have thought it wiser to use a long spoon when dealing with the Welsh Wizard.

26TH.—L. G. said some good things about "strong, silent men." This in connection with his Rectorial Address. The idea had evidently occurred to him in the night. In his usual charming fashion, he paid me a delicate little compliment by implying that my conversation had led him to it.

L. G. : The strong, silent man is a myth. All the big business men I have known have been great talkers ; for example, Pirrie, Maclay, Mond, Weir, Leverhulme, Inchcape, Northcliffe, Rothermere, Beaverbrook, yourself (pointing to me) and Inverforth in his way. Then again all great men of action have been great talkers. Julius Cæsar, Napoleon, Foch, Clemenceau, Wilson (President), Nelson, Gladstone, etc..

I said, "What about Lloyd George ?"

L. G. : Well, at any rate, they can't charge him with being silent.

Someone mentioned Kitchener as an exception. Both L. G. and I agreed that he was a great talker. I said Palmerston's diaries showed that Wellington was a talker.

L. G. : Morley says that Carlyle was responsible for the idea of the strong, silent man, but that it took him thirty volumes in order to expound his theory.

R. : The two Pitts were not silent. Whether Oliver Cromwell was a great talker, I don't know, but he was a first-rate speaker in the House of Commons. According to Ethel M. Dell, strong, silent men are great lovers, but this requires corroboration !

L. G. (laughing) : It certainly does.

It is interesting to note L. G.'s method of work, which differs essentially from that of the ordinary man and particularly the University man. Most people who have to write a thesis sit down and steadily produce it, for better or worse. L. G., on the other hand, produces his in bits. He has flashes of inspiration which he writes out and then dovetails them into the text.

MARCH 8TH.—I met Arthur Balfour in the House of Lords, and congratulated him on the speech he made there this afternoon. He was talking to the Duke of Devonshire. He took me by the arm, and said to the Duke, "He (meaning me) rendered great service when we were in America. I could not have done without him." I thought this very kind.

APRIL 2ND (BANK-HOLIDAY).—To Churt to spend the day with L. G.. He seemed well but looked rather thin and drawn. He said he had given up golf, and when we were discussing Gladstone's age remarked, "I shall never reach such an age. I shall be dead long before that."

R. : Nonsense. Why not ? You have amazing vitality.

L. G. : Yes, but Gladstone was a giant. My family are not long-lived.

R. : I expect you will smash the laws of heredity by living to a hundred. Anyway, I hope you will.

L. G. (laughing) : I shall do my best.

I am becoming very slack in keeping my Diary, and think I shall abandon it altogether before long.



## Chapter XLVIII

*Stories of Sir W. Robertson Nicoll—L. G. on good memories—Bonar Law's last illness—Mr. Baldwin's Government—Winston on his political principles—President Wilson on the League: "the world was not ready"—Curzon denies that he is "a superior person."*

MAY 6TH (SUNDAY), 1923.—To Churt for tea and dinner.

L. G. said he was afraid Bonar was done. His health was bad. It was a tragedy which grieved him. Bonar should never have taken the position. His Government had been a complete failure.

We talked of national defence. L. G. said he was strongly in favour of spending more on the air and that if we did not improve our air defences we might find ourselves in an awkward plight.

Speaking of the death of Robertson Nicoll,<sup>1</sup> L. G. said he was a great person and had been a good friend to him and a great help at the time of the war. Had it not been for Nicoll's attitude, the Free Churches might have taken a different line, and the whole course of the war might have been altered. Nicoll had enemies, due in a great measure to the fact that he was thorough. When he went into the war, he went into it heart and soul, as he (L. G.) himself had done. That was why he (L. G.) also had many enemies among the Liberals who agreed to go into the war but who, to satisfy their anti-war proclivities, were for carrying it on in a meagre and unsatisfactory way that would have led to disaster. L. G., on the other hand, having decided, much against his will, to support the war, was in favour of conducting it with the greatest possible energy. These remarks he made with much bitterness.

R. : Nicoll was a genius in his way—a learned man with remarkable powers of expression. It is a pity that all his work

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Robertson Nicoll, editor of the *British Weekly* since 1886; d. May 4th, 1923.

was ephemeral. He might have produced a great book of permanent importance on modern literature, concerning which he was an authority. He often contemplated retiring in order to write the book, but never did.

L. G. : That was a pity. He had a quaint way of talking, but was a wonderful conversationalist.

R. : Yes, he was a most attractive, lovable old boy. I was very fond of him. It was amusing to see him at work early in the morning, seated up in bed dictating articles to his secretary—a huge fire burning and powerful lights, and his two favourite black cats seated one at each bottom corner of the bed, which was covered with manuscripts, proofs and remnants of his breakfast.

L. G. : I can imagine it. At times he was very absent-minded.

R. : Yes, Hodder Williams used to allege that on one occasion, in a fit of abstraction, Nicoll packed the hotel sheets in his bag in mistake for his night clothes.

L. G. (laughing) : He was quite equal to it.

R. : Hodder Williams invented another amusing story. He said Nicoll gave a big reception for authors. In a fit of absent-mindedness, he heartily congratulated one of the hired waiters on his latest book, much to the waiter's mystification. Nicoll had an extraordinary memory for big and little things—an invaluable gift for a journalist. He ascribed this, in part, to the fact that he never made notes of what he had to do, but always relied on his memory. He frequently spoke in contemptuous terms of note addicts.

L. G. : Very few people have really good memories.

R. : You have an excellent memory.

L. G. : Yes, for facts and things I want to remember, but I have a poor verbal memory. I admit I don't make many notes but I think I don't forget much I have to do. (To me) You also have a good memory.

R. : Yes, but, like you, a poor verbal memory, and I never make notes. I often wonder how actors and actresses memorise their parts.

L. G. : Yes, so do I.

R. : Arthur Pearson told me that before he became blind

he was an inveterate note-writer and had a poor memory. After he became blind, he developed a remarkable memory because he had no notes on which to rely.

L. G. : Sometimes I envy people who can reel off verses and extracts from speeches without a mistake. However, one has to be thankful for one's own mercies.

R. : If you want to secure a good memory of any particular sort, you must choose your parents.

L. G. : It is a good job we can't do that. What a muddle it would be, probably worse than the present haphazard system.

R. : You have the rare and interesting gift of embellishing a story when you call it to mind, so that your version is frequently far better than the original.

L. G. (laughing) : I like the compliment, but the remark is double-edged !

29TH.—Sylvester tells me that he had tea with Bonar on Friday last, when B. bid him "Good-bye." S. said, "Not 'good-bye' ! I shall see you often again and hope you will soon be well." Bonar said nothing except to pat him on the shoulder and remark, "I am glad to have had your services." S. says that Bonar is suffering from cancer in the throat and that they cannot operate.<sup>1</sup>

This made me very miserable. Poor Bonar ! Evidently L. G. was right when he said he was done. A sad end for a sad man. Some weeks ago I heard from most reliable sources that he was about to resign, and on April 15th published an article to that effect. This was officially denied, but proved to be true.

30TH.—Horne had lunch with me. He says Baldwin<sup>2</sup> strongly pressed him to join the Government. Horne said, however, that he could not accept office without Chamberlain and strongly urged his inclusion in the Government. Baldwin was anxious to include Chamberlain, but was prevented by representations from some of the "Die-Hards." Horne thinks B. made a serious error and should have taken his courage in his hands. H. thinks it unlikely that McKenna will become Chancellor and added that it was impossible to

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Bonar Law died in the following October.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Baldwin succeeded Mr. Bonar Law as Prime Minister.

press Birkenhead's claims in view of his election attacks. Horne suggested to Baldwin that he would be wise to invite Winston to join the Government, as he would thus secure a powerful colleague and an excellent debater. Baldwin was evidently impressed by the idea, but doubtful of giving effect to it. Horne had lunch with Winston the other day and asked him where he stood politically. He replied, "I am what I have always been—a Tory Democrat. Force of circumstances has compelled me to serve with another party, but my views have never changed, and I should be glad to give effect to them by rejoining the Conservatives." Horne intends to devote himself to his commercial work, making occasional speeches in Parliament.

SEPTEMBER 10TH.—Long talk with Barney Baruch, the American, at the Ritz Hotel. He wired asking me to have tea with him. He began by complimenting me on my work at Washington, saying that I had done more for Britain than anyone present at the Conference by giving the Press a British tinge. I thanked him, but denied the innuendo. He laughed, and replied, "Well, that is the opinion in America!" I said, "Well, America is wrong for once!"

He gave a dramatic account of an interview between him and President Wilson, which took place recently. They are old friends.

Wilson, placing his paralysed arm on the table beside him, said in slow but firm accents, "Perhaps it was providential that I was stricken down when I was. Had I kept my health I should have carried the League. Events have shown that the world was not ready for it. It would have been a failure. Countries like France and Italy are unsympathetic with such an organisation. Time and sinister happenings may eventually convince them that some such scheme is required. It may not be my scheme. It may be some other. I see now, however, that my plan was premature. The world was not ripe for it."

Baruch said that the incident was so pathetic that he could only say in reply, "Well, Mr. Wilson, you did what you thought was for the best!"

R. : I don't know that you could have said anything more appropriate.

12TH.—Horne lunched with me. He thinks, to use his own phrase, that "the Cabinet are not envisaging the situation or taking adequate steps to meet it. They are only concerned with the things of the moment." He says that trade prospects are very bad, particularly in the cotton and steel trades. He thinks we are in for a bad time. He talked rather on the lines of Protection, but sees the difficulties. He says that Baldwin again recently urged him to join the Government, but that he had held aloof. Horne told me a good *bon mot* of Bonar Law's. "Providence has a good many strange experiences, but it must have been surprised to find that in one year it had Mussolini and Baldwin up its sleeve!"

NOVEMBER 5TH.—Met Admiral Hall, head of the Conservative Party Office, who spoke freely about the situation, pending election, tariff reform, etc.. I could see from the glint in his eye that he is a keen Protectionist. He enquired what I thought. I said, "Protection is a good starter, but a bad stayer. General principles are attractive, but the statement of details raises all sorts of difficult problems. Joseph Chamberlain told me that he did well with his campaign until he went into details." I could see that the Admiral was all for an early election.

13TH.—Long talk with Curzon, who was very frank about himself. He said, "I have always been misunderstood. It has been assumed that I am a pompous person, loving display and ceremony and devoid of any sense of humour. This is due, in a great measure, to the well-known skit about George Nathaniel Curzon being 'a most superior person.' The facts are that I have always loved social intercourse and in my younger days was an active member of several little groups renowned for their gaiety and liveliness. The skit was not written with any malicious motive. It was one of twenty or thirty others written by different people about their intimate friends. It arose out of the fact that one night, owing to the fog, I was compelled to stop at Blenheim. This led to a lot of good-humoured chaff. I think the skit was written by Beeching. In some way it got out. Journalists have a way of pigeon-holing information and producing it from time to time. When I went to India, the skit followed me there. It was supposed that I rejoiced in all the ceremonial appertaining to the Viceroyalty. It was quite

untrue. Being Viceroy, I did my best. In fact, I hate ceremonial and always try to avoid it. [I wonder whether he really believes this.] No one can say that I have ever pushed myself forward, advertised myself or tried to curry favour with the Press. Lately the newspapers have re-discovered me in a way. They say I have mellowed, which is absurd. I am what I have always been. A man does not change at 64. I have always taken a humorous view of life. Lately I have made a few light, humorous speeches which seem to have astonished the journalists—why, I really don't know, because I have made speeches of that kind all my life. I have never been an ogre. You ask how I learned to speak. I do not consider myself a first-class speaker, but I have a certain facility when speaking about subjects I know. I can say this for myself—all my life I have been a tremendous worker, working for many years twelve or fifteen hours a day. I have studied all sorts of things and done all sorts of things. I should have done better had I been more concentrated. My interests have been too many and too diverse. I have a good memory and usually speak best on the spur of the moment. You refer to the speech you heard me deliver the other day about libraries. I have been interested in this subject all my life. Therefore, it was no trouble to me to get up and talk about it. But had I prepared a speech, probably I should not have done so well. Owing to my infirmities—my bad back and my bad leg—during recent years I have been more and more driven to work, which has enabled me to fight the pain which I almost constantly suffer. My reputation is due in some measure to the fact that for many years I have been braced up with a girdle to protect my weak back. This gives me a rigid appearance which furnishes point to the reputation for pomposity. My father was a country gentleman, but when young I had no money and few friends and supporters. I knew no one. At the University I had to supplement my meagre income by writing. Thus I earned about £300 per annum. My friends I made for myself. Later, Mr. Gladstone and other distinguished people took notice of me and were very kind to me. I found them most helpful. My father was averse to my travelling. He did not like my journeys. He wanted me to settle down in England. Until I married my

first wife, who was a wealthy woman, I had no money to speak of. Indeed, I may say that I am a self-made man just as much as you are. I had to fight my way in life."

We talked of the political situation. He said, "Who would have believed, when Baldwin was made Prime Minister last May, that we should now be in the throes of a General Election? He is straightforward and honest, but his knowledge of the management of public affairs is not profound. Perhaps because he has had no experience, he is not skilled in the management of Cabinets, etc., and does not understand the preliminaries which should precede an appeal to the country. At the same time, the wire-pullers are all urging an immediate election. One objection is that there is no opportunity to collect funds."

I said I had told Hall that Protection was a good starter but a bad stayer.

C. agreed and referred to Chamberlain's experiences. I said, "It is curious to see Baldwin, F. E. and Chamberlain embracing after all the talk about 'second-class brains.'"<sup>1</sup>

Curzon laughed and said, "I don't think the embraces are likely to be very fervent on either side, but the same thing applies to the Liberal Party. I don't think that Mr. Asquith and Mr. Lloyd George are likely to embrace each other with much enthusiasm."

Curzon spoke very bitterly of our Greco-Turkish policy, for which he blamed L. G. and Venizelos. He said that when the true history is written the story will prove amazing.

I also had a long talk with Vansittart, Curzon's secretary, who expressed gloomy views concerning the European situation, saying that France was now the only European power that counted. Poincaré was a disagreeable man, but courageous and obstinate. His policy was definite and capable of execution, whereas ours was necessarily nebulous. I also had a few words with Eyre Crowe<sup>2</sup> on the staircase. He confirmed what Vansittart had said, and then left, looking like an undertaker.

<sup>1</sup> A contemptuous phrase directed by Lord Birkenhead against the new Conservative Government.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Eyre Crowe, Permanent Under Sec. for Foreign Affairs, 1920-25; d. 1925.

Here the Diary ends, except for a solitary entry in 1924 regarding an alleged *bon mot* of our beloved and most efficient King. Someone is said to have asked him, "How are you getting on with your Labour Government?" He is said to have replied, "Very well. My grandmother would have hated it ; my father would have tolerated it ; but I move with the times."



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